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The Aviary of Madame Helvetius.

A

FATHER'S ADVICE

TO

HIS DAUGHTER;

OR

INSTRUCTIVE NARRATIVES

FROM REAL LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

A FATHER'S TALES TO HIS DAUGHTER.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is with good reason, my Flavia, that we are said not to relinquish without difficulty habits which are pleasing to us. A few months only are elapsed since the publication of those Tales, which you wrote as I dictated, and already you importune me to resume our delightful occupation ; to renew those hours, in which, pouring out our hearts to each other, you assure me that under the mask of trifling I formed at once your mind and your heart. I see thee as I awake in the morning seated at my desk, thy eyes fixed upon mine, ready to trace upon the paper whatever may occur to my thoughts. Ah ! how resist wishes so interesting !—is it possible thus circumstanced not to be happily inspired ?

Yes ! I feel with an ardour equal to thy own the laudable desire of filling thy soul with impressions which may make thee one day cherished and esteemed to the utmost of my wishes. But I have already told thee, my

daughter, that it is not with *Tales* I must now seek to fix thy attention, to enlarge thy ideas, and to charm the moments that we pass together. I warn thee that it is *Advice* which is to succeed to those *Tales* with which thou wert so much delighted, and which the public has honoured with such distinguished approbation;—to those *Tales* which effected so great a change in thy disposition, and which have recompensed my toils beyond even my most sanguine hopes.

Do not be alarmed, my Flavia, at the title of A FATHER'S ADVICE TO HIS DAUGHTER, or imagine that thou wilt have to listen to an austere censor, or a dry moraliser; that I am going to weary thee by dwelling on abstruse systems, and dull maxims; in a word, that I am erecting one of those fabrics of science and morality too often resorted to by those who would instruct adolescence, but which only fatigue the youthful mind, and perhaps close it for ever against principles so much in opposition to its inclinations. This is not my method; I wish to instruct without the hand of instruction being perceptible; I wish to charm by variety, to persuade by examples, and to inspire

confidence by sensibility. Such is in my opinion the most effectual course to pursue, and such alone shall be the course pursued by me.

I feel, however, that the undertaking is no less delicate than important. If in my *Tales* I endeavoured to paint the follies, the defects, the amiable qualities of a girl from twelve to fifteen years of age ; if I had the happiness to destroy in thee the germ of the former, and to increase the latter, it is incumbent upon me now to point out to thee the dangers to which your sex is exposed at their first entrance into the world ; to guide you in the connections you may form, to make you feel all the importance of them ; to show you how, under the exterior of friendship, envy and falsehood are often concealed. I must endeavour to make you distinguish, amid the numerous circles in which you are about to appear, between extravagant adulation and well-deserved praise. I must endeavour to prepare thee to be one day the mistress of a family, to make thee sought out, not for a glittering show of empty talents, but for the real frankness and goodness of thy heart ; to surround thee, not with vain coquets whose only enjoyment is in endeavouring to turn into ridi-

cule those with whom they associate, but with real friends, who will be happy in seeing you happy, who will be the tutelary guardians of your reputation, and who will be proud of living in friendship with you. It is for me, in short, my Flavia, to direct you in the choice of a husband, to instruct you that he is not to be sought among the idle sons of opulence, among titled fools or shallow coxcombs, but among men who are frank, plain and sincere in their manners, who are in some profession useful to society, who are habituated to industry, the friends of good morals without being the enemies of pleasure, neither in the highest or lowest rank of society, who feel all the true dignity of their nature, and who consider marriage not as a tie of interest alone, but as a sacred compact to render her who has confided her destinies to him happy.

To find such a one, I must not dissemble to you, is no easy matter. I dare not promise that this end of all my endeavours, of all my cares, of all my tenderness, will ever be attained; but I will at least flatter myself that, instructed by the different examples which will be placed before your eyes, you will clearly see the vast

importance of a tie which is to bind us for life; and that, finding yourself happy in the arms of a father who loves you so tenderly, you will not rashly throw yourself into those of a husband, without having first made yourself thoroughly acquainted with his principles, without assuring yourself that his character renders him worthy of you, that his sentiments and tastes are responsive to your own.

In order that the examples I set before you may have greater weight, that they may be the more deeply impressed upon your mind, I have sought them in real life, either from historical facts, or from incidents which I myself witnessed among the different classes of society with whom I have long been connected. It is, above all, among those who have left an illustrious name behind them that I have chosen my models; and desirous that these anecdotes, of the authenticity of which I can assure thee, should amuse at the same time that they instruct, I have sought those that were not known to thee, or which could not fail of producing a strong effect upon thy youth and inexperience.

This choice, you will easily perceive, must have cost me much trouble, and a great deal of anxious research ; it required no small degree of patience and of reflection. All is arranged in my head and in my heart ; nothing remains but to dictate to thee in such a manner as may give my lessons the highest degree of utility of which they are susceptible, as may make thee love and revere the moral they contain, and if possible may charm thee in the recital. In a word, my Flavia, I hasten to present to thy observation all that can render thy sex most respectable and respected. I cite facts in support of my *Advice* ; so that, if thou shouldst ever find thyself in such or such a situation, similar to what is here traced, thou mayst refer immediately to my lessons, and learn how to avoid the evil, or promote the good, of which my *Advice* has given the examples.

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A

FATHER'S

ADVICE TO HIS DAUGHTER;

OR,

INSTRUCTIVE NARRATIVES.

THE AVIARY OF MADAME HELVETIUS.

MADAME HELVETIUS, the amiable wife of the celebrated writer of that name, who has described with so much eloquence the advantages to be derived from the mind, and the errors to which it is liable; a lady whose graces and rare qualities inspired her husband with the sentiments of his charming poem entitled "Happiness," had a remarkable fondness for birds.

She knew every genus and every species of them, and collected them at her beautiful house at Auteuil in a large elegant aviary, which was only shut during the night in order to preserve her numerous family from noxious animals. In the morning, as soon as she had given to each of them the food that was best suited to it, she opened the doors of their prison, and left them to the enjoyment of di-

spersing themselves about the country. Very often a small part of them only returned in the evening. In fine weather particularly the joyful flock finding sufficient nourishment out of doors, forgot the asylum where the most solicitous attention supplied an abundance equal to or beyond what they found elsewhere. But an insect just ready to fly, the muddy water of a pool, and the slightest shelter under the foliage of a tree or shrub, were preferred to the long millet straw, to the fountains of clear water, and to the nests of moss and down, with which the aviary was furnished. So true it is that nothing can compensate the charms of liberty and independence!

But from the time the frosts began, almost all the fugitives returned to enjoy the comforts of hospitality. It even often happened that these little emigrants brought with them a great number of the birds of the neighbourhood, who sought like them to avoid the horrors of cold and hunger; for every thing yields to the imperious law of necessity.

Madame Helvetius never parted from her numerous and dear guests but with regret; but the celebrity of her name, her natural graces, and the charms of her society, often recalled her to the capital, whither she usually went towards the month of January.

It was the memorable winter of 1788 which made such ravages and occasioned so many misfortunes to France. The oldest forests were in part destroyed: the rivers rolling down

from mountains of ice which were heaped one upon another, broke their banks and destroyed alike the castles and the cottages. The wild beasts besieged the hamlets, darted into the sheepfolds, and even upon the cradles of children; their cruel hunger drove them to devour every thing that came in their way. Travellers were met on the great roads who were in a manner petrified with the cold; in the fields and in the woods, the game of all kinds was found dead upon the snow; and the birds fell by thousands into the snares, into which they were attracted by the least bait that they presented to them. It might have been said that the stars had deviated from their course; and that France, the mildness of whose climate is not one of the least advantages that it has received from nature, had changed its place upon the globe, and was all at once transported into Greenland, or Nova Zembla.

Madame Helvetius, after having taken care that her aviary at Auteuil did not suffer in any way from so disastrous a winter, employed herself at Paris in relieving the distressed in the part of the town that she inhabited. Her compassion extended to every suffering being around her. From the windows of her apartment which looked upon a long terrace, she often saw a great number of sparrows, who at night took refuge in the stables of her hotel, and during the day sought every where in vain for some food. Exposing herself without regard to the rigours of the cold, she swept the snow from

a part of the terrace, and never failed in the morning to scatter there seeds of all kinds, on which an immense number of birds immediately threw themselvss, approaching her. without fear, and even coming into her room.

One day as she was thus indulging herself in the pleasure of feeding all the sparrows in her neighbourhood, one amongst them came and perched upon her head, then descended to her shoulder, and at last came and nestled in her bosom. Madame Helvetius thought at first that this boldness was occasioned by the cold with which the bird seemed to be overcome. Her first care was to warm it in her hands, and then to revive it by the fire; but perceiving that it perched familiarly upon her finger, reclined upon her neck, and made caressing gestures by beating its wings; Madame Helvetius no longer doubted that it was a tame sparrow that had flown from some neighbouring house, and which was attracted, like so many others, by the seeds scattered upon the terrace.

After having shown this refugee every attention that its gentleness and familiarity inspired, Madame Helvetius would not make it repay them with its liberty: she therefore opened her window, and said to the bird: "If you belong to any body in this part of the town, they must be uneasy as to your fate. Fly instantly to satisfy those who regret you. If you cannot find your asylum again, return to me, poor little wanderer, oh! return again to warm yourself in my bosom!" At these words she gave the

sparrow a kiss, and it then flew away and escaped from her sight.

The next day, when Madame Helvetius lavished to her protégés the food of which they were so much in need, the same deserter came again hovering over her head; and, lighting upon her hand, seemed to express all the pleasure that it felt at revisiting its benefactress. As she was caressing it anew, and warming it with her breath, she perceived that the bird had a little collar of blue silk twist upon its neck, to which hung a small bag made of the finger of a glove: Madame Helvetius took hold of this bag to examine what it might be, and thought she felt a paper in it. She searched it immediately with a lively curiosity, and actually found a very small piece of paper folded into the least possible form. On opening it she perceived several lines of close writing, the ink of which being still fresh, made it obvious that they had been written in haste. The first thing presented to her eyes was the following couplet from a celebrated poet:

“By thee the younglings of the nest are fed,
And o’er all nature are thy bounties shed.”

Madame Helvetius, as much affected as surprised, finished reading the note, which was in these words:

“Some worthy persons in your neighbourhood languish in distress, will you do less for them than for the numerous family which you are seen to succour every morning?”

“Undoubtedly not!” exclaimed Madame

Helvetius, giving herself up to her emotion : “ how can one resist so affecting an appeal, or refuse so charming a messenger ? ” She flew immediately to her secretary, took from it a note for fifty pounds, and put it into the little bag, instead of that which it had contained ; then kissing the sparrow several times for its commission, went out upon the terrace, and let it take its flight. She wished to follow it with her eyes, and, by observing the direction in which it flew, to discover on which side the unfortunate persons lived whom she had assisted : but the bird passing rapidly over the trees of the garden, concealed itself from the observation of its benefactress, and left her full of the most gratifying reflections.

What above all things engaged the imagination of Madame Helvetius, was to learn how the faithful sparrow had been taught to fulfil such a commission. “ By what means,” she said to herself, “ can it have been accomplished, to make him direct his flight towards my apartment, to hit upon the moment at which I gave food to its companions in misfortune, to come and rest upon my head ; in a word, to distinguish and choose me for the consoler of suffering beings, for whom it is the captivating mediator?....The more I think upon it, the more I am at a loss.”

Several days passed in which Madame Helvetius thought incessantly on this singular adventure ; but she forbore from any mention of it, as that would have been to reveal her good

works, and she knew by experience that secrecy doubles the value of a benefit. Sometimes also in the liveliness of her brilliant imagination, and from her extensive knowledge of the world, she feared that she might have been made the dupe of intrigue or avarice; as amongst the interesting beings who have a claim upon our compassion, so many impostors obtrude themselves who abuse our confidence!

One morning as Madame Helvetius was employed in sweeping the snow from the terrace, in order to assemble the birds, the faithful messenger returned, with the same little bag hanging from its neck into which this benevolent lady had put the note for fifty pounds. She supposed that it was come again with a request for further assistance, and prepared to deposit in the bag a fresh pledge of her generosity; but what was her surprise to find a second note in it, expressed in the following terms:

“You have saved an estimable artist and his numerous family; the fifty pounds will be remitted to you, as soon as the return of spring and the labour of our hands will allow us to acquit ourselves of the obligation.”

Madame Helvetius read over this anonymous note several times; and perceiving that many of the words were partly effaced by tears of gratitude, she could not restrain her tears, and was still more satisfied at having yielded to the first impulse of her heart. She detained

the engaging messenger some time, unable to cease caressing it; but reflecting to what a degree this bird must be dear to the family who thus confided its destiny to it, she restored it to liberty as soon as she had put the following answer to the note into the little bag:

“I supposed I had made a gift: if it is but a loan, the happiness of having been useful to you will make me your debtor.”

From that moment the tame sparrow reappeared no more. Madame Helvetius vainly supposed she recognised it in each one of its species whom her kindness drew together; but as soon as she would have put her hand on one of them, the whole flock flew away with a rapid wing, and saved themselves as from before a bird of prey.

The frosts at length ceased; and the snow yielding to the rays of the sun, which acquired more power every day, announced that the appearance of the spring would not be long delayed. Madame Helvetius now scattered her abundance of seeds in vain, as she no longer attracted more than a small number of her dear guests: the others finding a sufficient supply for their wants, and already engaged in preparing the nests which were to contain their first broods, came but seldom upon the terrace. They even seemed to become more wild in proportion as the fine weather returned. Madame Helvetius felt a secret mortification at this forgetfulness, at this ingratitude: “But can one,” she remarked to herself, “impute

to birds as a fault, what one meets with every moment amongst mankind?"

On the first of May this lady returned to her house at Auteuil, in order to repair the disasters of the cruel winter which was just over. She was eager above every thing to make good the injuries that the frosts had occasioned in her aviary. There, every time that she cast a look on the several sparrows which made a part of her various collection, they recalled to her mind the engaging mediator between her and the unknown family; and although this species of bird may not be remarkable either for the variety of its song, or the splendour of its plumage, Madame Helvetius felt a predilection, she could not resist, for every sparrow that she saw, for which the generosity of her heart fully accounted.

Towards the middle of the summer she was obliged to leave her rural occupations, as some business made it necessary for her to go to Paris.

A few days after her arrival, as she was enjoying the morning air upon the terrace, she perceived the faithful sparrow, with the same little bag hanging from its neck, flying about here and there, seeming no longer to know her. It was in vain that she called to it, threw it some seeds, and made a thousand caressing motions to it: the sparrow passed and repassed over her head, expressing at once a fear and a desire of resting there. Madame Helvetius then supposed that it must be the

change in her dress which occasioned this distrust.

Returning immediately into the house, she changed her dress for the winter clothes in which she had received the bird many months before, putting on a blue satin pelisse lined with ermine, and a large green velvet mantle, although it was one of the hottest days of the year, and re-appeared upon the terrace. The sparrow as she had foreseen came to her instantly, and perching upon her shoulder expressed by every possible means his confidence and joy. Madame Helvetius impatiently opened the little bag, and found a note for fifty pounds, enclosed in a paper containing these few lines :

“We lose no time in acquitting ourselves of the sum of money that you have condescended to lend us ; but not of our gratitude, which will remain for ever engraven on our hearts.”

Madame Helvetius was at first tempted to send back the fifty pounds ; but she reflected that this might only deprive these amiable unknown persons of the sweet enjoyment of having acquitted themselves of a sacred debt. Being desirous to accustom the intelligent messenger to know her in her summer dress, she put off her mantle and pelisse, and appeared in a white morning dress, without a cap. The sparrow was soon reconciled to this new appearance ; and as his intelligence, and the services that he had been instrumental in,

often procured him his liberty, he came regularly every morning to Madame Helvetius's terrace. If she did not appear in a short time, he struck with his bill against her window, in order, if it may be so expressed, not to return without having paid his homage to his amiable benefactress.

Not many days after, on a Sunday, Madame Helvetius, having resorted to her favourite walk the botanic garden, after walking about some time sat down, in company with many persons of distinction who formed her usual society. She was earnestly engaged in a delightful conversation, when all at once the faithful sparrow, which had been so often a messenger to her, came out from under the silk handkerchief of a young woman sitting opposite to her upon a bank of turf, and, lighting upon Madame Helvetius, testified by his caresses that he knew her again. "It is my pretty messenger!" she exclaimed, kissing it repeatedly: "but how could it come into this public garden, in the midst of so much company?" "Let me beg you will excuse it, madam," said a young girl of ten or twelve years old as she approached Madame Helvetius; "it is my sister's favourite."

"And who is your sister, my little friend?"

"That young woman drest in white, that you see there by my father and mother: this bird I assure you belongs to her; she would not part with it for all the money in the world."

When she had done speaking, she pointed

to a young woman of sixteen or seventeen years old of an interesting figure, who colouring with joy and surprise said to her parents, "It is she! Yes, it is she herself."

Madame Helvetius was immediately surrounded by the father, mother, and six children, who, alternately prompted by gratitude and restrained by respect, addressed her in a thousand graceful acknowledgements of gratitude, confused with as many excuses for their obtrusion upon her. The eldest daughter in particular was so overpowered with her emotions, that her voice faltered to such a degree she was unable to articulate a word. She pressed the hands of Madame Helvetius to her heart, and bathed them with her tears. During this time the faithful sparrow flew from one to the other, and completed this charming scene.

At last the young Elizabeth, for such was the name of this unknown person, recovering her voice, informed Madame Helvetius that she was the eldest daughter of a carver of the name of Valmont; that her father, having been attacked with a lingering illness, had been unable to work, which had reduced them to great distress; and as the labour of his children could not effectually relieve them, they being as yet in general quite young; the name of Madame Helvetius had inspired her with the happy idea of procuring that assistance for her father by the means she had adopted, that his spirit would not suffer them to beg. That in

a word it was she, who unknown to her parents had made the experiment of sending her dear sparrow, whose intelligence had seconded her views beyond what she could have hoped.

“But by what means, let me understand,” said Madame Helvetius, “did you accomplish the directing our mutual interpreter to me?”

“Oh! madam, it has cost me great pains and great distress!” replied the young Elizabeth, caressing the sparrow which was upon her breast.

“I have often been obliged to expose it to the severity of the cold, I have even been obliged to have the cruelty to keep it without food for whole days, in order that it might be attracted, like all the other birds, by the food that you threw out to them, that it might be accustomed to see you, and to approach you. I observed all that was going forward from the window of my room, which looks upon your garden. Sometimes the poor little creature flew about the neighbourhood quite frightened, and only returned after a long time allured by the sound of my voice. Sometimes it was pursued by the wild sparrows, and returned wounded from their pecking it, and with its wings torn. At last I saw it one day flying about you, and lighting upon your head. The next day, having again had the resolution to deprive it of food, I seized the moment at which you threw out your benefaction of seeds upon the terrace, and risked the little bag which contained my first note. You know what followed.”

Madame Helvetius could not, any more than those who surrounded her, suppress the most lively emotion. This interesting detail made her feelingly alive to the tender ingenuity of filial piety. She pressed the young Eliza-beth several times in her arms, thanking her for having selected her to assist in saving her estimable family, and entreating her not to let the dear sparrow lose the habit of coming often to see her. And in relating this anecdote she never failed to repeat, what I here repeat to you, my daughter, as my first advice, That it is better to pardon one guilty person than to condemn an innocent one. That even the fear of encouraging vice, or of favouring imposture, ought never to make us lose an opportunity of assisting honest and respectable poverty.

MADAME COTTIN'S FILEMOT GOWN.

THOSE who endeavour in their writings to describe nature with fidelity, to retrace the virtues and the vices, the charms and the absurdities of society, are in general silent; they only appear in its numerous circles to choose their models and take notes; they dread attracting observation, and wish, if it may be so expressed, to render themselves invisible to every body.

Such was Madame Cottin, whom it is sufficient to name, to point out at once a mind of the most amiable sensibility, the most indisputable talents, and the most interesting modesty. Indulgent towards others, she was severe only towards herself. Her greatest pleasure was to hear a discussion of her own works, without being known to the persons who were criticising them. Even the bitterest censure interested her, as she always hoped to derive some advantage from it; but applause seemed an insupportable punishment to her, and there was no precaution that this modest woman did not employ to avoid it.

Thus she seldom appeared in the world, where her invariable sweetness and known celebrity made her much sought after. Not having the happiness of being a mother, she made up this privation to herself in some

measure by adopting the three daughters of a friend, who had lost her fortune and her husband in the civil commotions of the country. Every moment that Madame Cottin could spare from her individual occupations was devoted to the education of these charming orphans. To instruct them by amusing them; to guide them through the early paths of life, of which she better than any one knew all the intricacies; to preserve them from the dangers that surround youth; in a word, to infuse into their minds all the treasures of her own, was the favourite employment of this attractive and generous woman, and her highest gratification.

In order to release herself for ever from the trouble of her toilette, and more especially to economize the time that it required, Madame Cottin had for several years made it a rule always to wear the same kind of dress. This consisted of a filemot* taffety gown, and a large black hat in the English fashion, under which her beautiful light hair was negligently done up. This hat also hid her large blue eyes, which sometimes sparkling with animation, varied the general expression of sweetness which constituted their principal charm.

This uniform dress was so much the more grateful to Madame Cottin, as it procured her the happiness of presenting to her three adopted daughters the dresses and trinkets with which she had a pleasure in ornamenting them. It is

* *Feuille-morte*, French, the colour of a dead leaf.

even certain that she carried the friendship which had united her to the mother of these orphans, so far, that out of an income of about six hundred pounds a-year she would spend only what was merely necessary to support her moderate establishment. The remainder was destined for the fortunes of her adopted family.

With all these excellent qualities which characterize Madame Cottin, she had so much unaffected simplicity, that she was often taken only for an obscure woman, and her silence and general deportment were sometimes attributed to a want of habit, sometimes to a deficiency of expression and feeling, and sometimes to the fear of being remarked for improper phraseology.

These frequent marks of contempt very much amused this celebrated woman, and would for the time disengage her from the profound reveries occasioned by her literary occupations. How much it is to be lamented that her too great application to these, though they will transmit her name to posterity, should have brought her to the grave in the full vigour of her talents!

The three sisters whom she loved with so much affection, were one day invited to a splendid ball, where there was to be a numerous but chosen assemblage of young persons. Madame Cottin herself would preside at the toilettes of her beloved élèves, and had drest them in the most valuable things that she possessed; but

just as they were about to get into the coach, the mother of the young ladies was obliged to attend to some unforeseen business, and could not accompany them.

“It must be owned that it is a pity,” said the youngest of them, “after so much attention to our dress!” “And which,” added another of them, “has been so much trouble to our governess” This being the modest appellation by which their amiable benefactress wished them to call her.

“Oh, if our governess did not shun large companies,” said the eldest of the three sisters, “we would entreat her to complete her kindness, by accompanying us to this fine assembly; there is to be a concert and a ball, which I love to distraction.”

“It would be cruel, my dear children,” said their governess so appropriately called, “to make you give up so much pleasure. I will go with you, but it is on condition that you do not name me; let me enjoy this moving picture in my own way, where I shall no doubt furnish myself with many sketches that will be of use to me hereafter. And above all things, leave every body to their mistakes about me, and to amuse themselves at my expense as much as they please.”

“We will engage for this,” exclaimed the three sisters at once, impatient to partake of the so much desired entertainment.

Madame Cortin dressed herself immediately in her filemot gown, with her large black hat

drawn very much over her eyes; and conducted her young friends to the assembly, where they found a very numerous and respectable company.

The three orphans, in the name of their mother, expressed her regrets to the lady of the house, that it was not in her power to accompany them; and Madame Cottin, with her eyes cast down and a timid voice, announced that she was charged with the care of these young ladies, that they might not be deprived of the pleasure of so brilliant an assembly.

The expressive manner of the unknown lady, contrasted with the simplicity of her dress, did not escape the lady who received her; she perceived at the first glance, that she must be some distinguished woman. This was not the case with her only daughter and the young giddy friends who surrounded her. They took Madame Cottin for some relation newly arrived from the country, or for some trusty dependent delighted to find herself for once in the great world. Seated in a retired corner of a large and magnificent room, she received only such indispensable marks of politeness as are supposed to be a great honour to those who receive them; while the three sisters, graceful, blooming, and elegantly drest, were overwhelmed with attentions, and soon joined the dance.

What principally excited the satirical criticism of the thoughtless young people, who passed and repassed Madame Cottin, was the

colour of her dress. Though she had but an imperfect view of the company, she easily perceived that her filemot gown was the subject of pretty general conversation. "Oh! what a fine colour!" said an elegant young girl with an impertinent smile: "it is surprising that it is not the fashion."—"If the lady were to be presented," stammered out another silly girl, viewing her, "take my word for it, all the ladies of the court would be in filemot dresses."—"Every thing looks faded by a filemot gown," added a third.—"There is nothing so becoming as a filemot gown," interrupted another.—"Oh! the admirable choice!" exclaimed her neighbour.

Madame Cottin smiled inwardly at these passing attacks, and took silent sketches in her own mind of all these originals. But what put the finishing stroke to her contempt, was the expression they assumed towards her three young friends when they named her. One of them, unable even in the midst of the most intoxicating pleasures to forget the very great kindness of their benefactress, seeing her quite alone in a corner, said to her sisters: "We are very much amused, but I am afraid our governess must be quite wearied."

These words were overheard by a great many young people, and particularly by the daughter of the lady of the house. She immediately supposed that the unknown person was nothing more than the governess of these

young ladies. Shocked that any body should dare to introduce such a person into so select a society, and fearing that the report of it might get about the room, and offend the genteel company which was now assembled at her mother's house, she went and sat down by the filemot gown, at which she still laughed in spite of herself, and thus began her conversation: "You must be extremely fatigued, my dear madam, in the midst of so much company?"—"I madam? I am never fatigued."—"If you would like to go down stairs, you will find people there, particularly my mother's waiting-woman, quite a good kind of person; she is about your age, of your kind of disposition, and it would give her real pleasure."—"I would willingly go," replied Madame Cottin smiling, who guessed her drift, "but that I find myself so well here."—"Yet the sitting so still and silent as I have seen you do for a long time, and the being so little accustomed as you must be,"—"does not prevent, I assure you, my remarking all that passes in this assembly."—"Indeed!—Ah, you are very observing! If this is so, you must have perceived that your gown"..... "is the only one that suits me. It is time for me to lay aside the little arts of dress. I am no longer young, nor handsome."—"What! have you ever been so?"—"Not so handsome as you are, that would be difficult; but perhaps sufficiently noticed to retain a tender remembrance of it."—

“How ! am I then mistaken ?” said the young lady, struck with the answers of this unknown person, and changing her tone.—“Oh madam, I perceive now that you are the friend, the Mentor of these young ladies.”—“Their Mentor ! they have no occasion for any ; they are so good, so unpresuming and well behaved ! and these qualities in a woman double the attractions with which she is endowed by nature.”

The surprise and curiosity of this giddy creature were now at their height ; and the conversation was leading to a more serious explanation, when a handsome young man taking her hand led her to join in an English dance, in which she exhibited her talents and graces. Nevertheless, even while dancing she perpetually turned her eyes towards the file of gown, recollecting at the same time with what dignity, and still more with what acuteness, the unknown had found the means of giving her a lesson that she so much deserved ; and growing uneasy at her mistake, she was already studying the means of repairing it.

As soon as the English dance was finished, the company went into a second room ornamented with flowers and wreaths, to a most magnificent supper. The ladies only sat down to the table. Madame Cottin, after having placed her three adopted daughters at it, and recommended them to the ladies around them, returned to her favourite seat in the corner.

There, in banishment as it might be called, and forgotten by every body, she was roused from her reveries by the lady of the house, who came to offer her some refreshment, and by her three young friends, who by turns paid her such devoted attention, and testified such a tender respect for her, that those who saw it did not dare to ridicule her filemot gown any longer, and began to fear that they had been mistaken respecting her.

Yet a great many of the fashionable people of the day, who hovered about her, continued their raillery, and did not cease to laugh at the expense of the abstracted lady. While at the same time a small groupe of well informed men were conversing on the modern works in French literature which were then the most celebrated, the conversation fell naturally on the work of Madame Cottin, entitled "*Matilda*," which was just published. Some criticised it, and others praised it extravagantly; but the persons of sense and acknowledged information unanimously avowed that it was the *chef-d'œuvre* of its author.

"How much I admire that pure and timid virgin in the midst of the camp and of the convulsion of the passions!" said a celebrated literary character, turning his back to Madame Cottin.

"How noble and affecting!" exclaimed a second, stepping upon her filemot gown; "and how venerable is the Archbishop of Tyre,

who does not fear exposing his own life to save that of the chief of the infidels ! This is as true piety should be painted ; this is to make religion cherished and respected.”— Another admired the character of the brave Montmorency ; and another still the judicious conduct and variety of the work, and particularly the morality of the conclusion.

In the middle of this discourse the supper was over ; and the lady of the house, who returned into the ball-room with her company, took an active part in the conversation, and displayed not only taste but genius and information. The different works of Madame Cottin were passed in review. Each one delivered his opinion, maintained his criticism, and gave reasons for his preference ; but all agreed to rank her amongst the privileged beings, who are an honour to the age and country in which they were born. The ladies especially were not silent in her praise. They repeated with ardour several passages from “ Matilda,” and cited that work as the production of a deep study of the human heart, and as the effusion of a mind of the greatest sensibility. Every body was of this opinion, and there was not even the most superficial young person who did not render homage to the acknowledged talents of Madame Cottin.

“ I do not admire literary women,” said very affectedly one of the young ladies, who had ridiculed the poor filemot gown with

the greatest severity ; “ but Madame Cottin is irresistible. Upon my honour she has made me cry a hundred times.”

“ I would give all the world to see her and be acquainted with her,” said another with a whirl ; “ but she is not to be met with any where ; she is like those beneficent stars that hide themselves under a cloud.”

“ How can any body shun the society of which they would be the delight ?” added the mistress of the house. “ What an advantage the society of such a woman would be, and how valuable her friendship must be to those who possess it !” “ Oh ! yes, madam,” answered involuntarily the youngest of the three sisters, who at that moment were standing round their modest benefactress.—“ What do you say, madam ? have you then the singular advantage of knowing her ?”

The young girl was going to speak again ; but a glance from her elder sister, and above all a hasty signal from Madame Cottin, closed her mouth.

“ What a suspicion !” continued the lady, addressing herself to the unknown. “ Can it be that under this simple dress—Ah ! I am no longer surprised at that irresistible tone that struck me when you presented these young ladies to me. Is it then really Madame Cottin whom I have the honour of receiving at my house ? I avow that I shall be happy and proud of it.”

“ O my governess !” resumed the young or-

phan, throwing herself into her arms, “forgive me if I have betrayed your secret, if I have failed of my promise; but the sudden transition from bitter raillery to praises so deserved, bewildered my senses so much that I have neither known what I said nor what I did.”—“Yes,” said in her turn the eldest sister with as much animation as dignity, “yes, it is the celebrated Madame Cottin, she is our governess, O our incomparable governess! You all make an elogium on her talents, but it belongs to us to make that on her heart.”—In spite of all the efforts of their generous friend to prevent their speaking, in spite of the sufferings that she expressed by signs and interrupted words, the three sisters could not resist the pleasure of revenging her for the contempt with which she had been overwhelmed, by divulging all that she had done for their family.

When the real and honourable motive was known for the simplicity of her dress, the whole assembly, transported with surprise and admiration, pressed in crowds about Madame Cottin. The women taking her hands covered them with kisses and with tears; the men kissed the hem of that filemot gown which had appeared so ridiculous to them, and which the young people had so outrageously abused. It was now a contest who should first express their regret, and make their apologies; every one made interest for the favour of a look, for the honour of a word; and that wo-

man who a few moments before was regarded only as an obscure being, upon whom it was their amusement to cast sarcasm and contempt, seemed all at once transformed into a tutelar divinity, whom they surrounded with homage and whose clemency they invoked.

But of all this idolatrous crowd, the one who appeared the most eager, the most penitent, was the daughter of the mistress of the house. At the knees of Madame Cottin she said to her with an affecting expression, and a faltering voice, "It is I—yes, it is I who am the most guilty. I have been so mistaken as to think you unworthy to remain in this room !....I have even forgotten myself so far as to propose to you.....Oh! madam! if your indulgence does not equal your celebrity, I shall forever lose, what I am the most ambitious to obtain, your friendship and esteem."

Madame Cottin eagerly assisted this disconsolate penitent to rise, and, pressing her to her heart, proved by the kindest expressions that she was far from harbouring the least resentment. To convince her of it, she proposed to her to become the friend of her three adopted daughters, whose indiscretion she excused; for, much as they had occasioned her modesty to suffer, they had also procured her an enjoyment which could not be bought too dear.

The mother of the young lady, taking advantage like a sensible woman of this opportunity of completely putting an end to a giddiness in her daughter, that might injure her re-

putation and pervert the goodness of her heart gave her the advice, Never to judge by appearances ; to recollect that true merit might often be concealed under outward simplicity or even singularity. And pointing to Madame Cottin's gown, she added in the most amiable manner : " You see, my daughter, it is possible to find a resplendent flower and delicious fruit under a DEAD LEAF."

THE PATHETIC AIRS OF DALAYRAC.

MONSIEUR DE SAINT MARK, one of the ancient life-guards at the Court of France, had lived a bachelor many years. He was united in the warmest friendship with Dalayrac, who, though then young, displayed talents which predicted the brilliant career he has since run in the composition of dramatic music.

Saint Mark was endowed by nature with a profound sensibility, but it was only to be perceived by those with whom he lived upon terms of extreme intimacy. The masculine sound of his voice, the roughness of his features, and the bluntness of his manners, threw a veil over the affectionate dispositions of his heart; and even when he was desirous of evincing tenderness, or wished to say something soothing, any one would rather have been disposed to fly terrified from him, than to abandon themselves to an emotion for which it was scarcely possible to give him credit. He presented one of those striking contrasts which alternately attracts and repels; his manners were an odd assemblage of roughness and mildness, of carelessness and misanthropy, of patience and hastiness. Apparently not to be moved, never was his countenance illumined by a smile; never did his eyes, which were shaded with thick dark brows, shed a tear;—but never did he fail to dry those which he saw shed by others.

Honour and the arts were the divinities to whom he bowed. Music above all had an irresistible empire over his soul. It was even curious to see him at the first performance of the compositions of Dalayrac. Whether his bosom was affected by his eager friendship for the author, or that the simplicity and pathos of the airs themselves, by which the rest of the audience were always so deeply affected, produced similar emotions in him, he could never conceal the effect they had upon his whole frame. It was then that, spite of himself, he could no longer maintain an appearance of insensibility ; that, yielding to an involuntary impulse, his austerity, which was at all times but a mask that disguised the purest taste and the most ardent feelings, was wholly subdued.

I was near him at the first representation of *Camilla*, which must undoubtedly be ranked among the *chef d'œuvres* of our composer. At the moment when the actress who performed this part, so difficult and so pathetic, in singing the beautiful air in the third act, came to the words, "*There is no woe which may not be effaced by a tender kiss given to our child,*" every one, carried away by the charm of the music and the force of the situation, expressed their emotions by the most eager applauses mingled with showers of tears. Saint Mark, silent and motionless, observing me with my eyes bathed with tears, seized my hand, pressed it warmly, and said to me in a rough

tone, "How happy are you to be able to weep! For my part, I am suffocated, and must retire." He immediately quitted the theatre, remaining in the vestibule till the conclusion of the performance, waiting for Dalayrac's going away. At sight of him he threw himself upon his neck, felicitating him eagerly upon the agony which he had occasioned him.

Another day, when *The two little Savoyards* was performed for the first time, a piece in which the gaiety, the naïveté of the rural songs in the vales of Savoy are so enchantingly displayed by Dalayrac, the whole company was inspired with a delight that seemed to trill through the soul. The house resounded on all sides with the clapping of hands, and with peals of laughter. Saint Mark alone did not join in the general chorus; his seriousness and immoveability formed a singular contrast with the raptures of all around him; he only observed, with a dryness and sang-froid altogether singular, "Here are indeed two little Savoyards, who will black the shoes of the comic opera for a long time*."

This apparent inflexibility is not uncommon among men who, endowed with extraordinary

* In order that the point of this observation may be understood, it should be observed, that of the numerous little shoe-blacks which abound in the streets of Paris, the greater part are Savoyards. The beautiful little Opera of *The two Savoyards*, composed by Dalayrac, is well known even in this country.

physical powers, and being of an exceedingly reflective turn, blush at the idea of betraying sensibility. But under this rough and repulsive exterior they sometimes conceal all the excellent qualities which form the man of true worth; often even those which constitute the truly amiable man.

Such was Monsieur de Saint Mark, though long misapprehended among the most brilliant circles at Paris. A young woman however, a widow without children, whose high birth, whose beauty and whose talents acquired her the admiration of the gallants of the day, and who was one of the ornaments of all the most distinguished parties in the capital, had judgement enough to discern and appreciate merits so generally overlooked. By her, Saint Mark was preferred to all the flutterers around her, because she felt assured that in him she should find a frank and upright heart, a sincere attachment, a character which would stand every trial. Even his bluntness had to her its charms, and seemed to offer her a presage of particular happiness in an union with him.

She was not deceived in her expectations. Never did man make a more kind and affectionate husband, never did any one pay more assiduous attention to a wife, or evince more tenderness and attachment than were shown by Saint Mark to the woman who had intrusted her happiness in his hands. The preference with which he had been honoured by her, rendered her so dear to him, that he

thought it scarcely sufficient to devote his whole life to her to prove his gratitude.

A daughter, to whom was given the name of Isaura, was the only fruit of this happy marriage. The living image of her mother, she partook of all her graces, her beauty, her mildness, and these rare gifts of nature were embellished by every accomplishment which a polished education can bestow. But the most remarkable feature in the character of Isaura was her unbounded attachment to her father. What anxiety did she not evince to please him! how assiduously did she study all his tastes, and endeavour by the most delicate, and to him imperceptible means, to soften the austerity by which he was characterized! She did not require from him any caresses or effusions of tenderness; a look, a pressure of the hand was sufficient.

Saint Mark lived retired at a country-house he had in Touraine, where the simplicity of his tastes, the frankness of his character, and the urbanity of the good inhabitants of this garden of France, afforded him a shelter from the ravages of that anarchy which then unhappily prevailed. There he delivered himself up to the charms of a rural life, and to the cares required of him in the education of his dear Isaura. Deprived of many of his former friends, and of the greater part of his early companions in arms, his affections were concentrated in his family; and he sought to divert her attention

from a mournful reflection on the past, to the consoling picture of the future.

Isaura at the age of fifteen was a model of every thing worthy to be loved. Her moral qualities, directed by her father, had even at that early age acquired a firmness which gave added dignity to her charms. The tenderness of her soul, and the blessings which she shed upon all by whom she was surrounded, established her so high a character in the neighbourhood, that she could not stir out of her father's mansion without receiving the most honourable tributes, without hearing endless blessings invoked upon her by all the indigent whom she had assisted, by numbers whom she had rendered happy.

Saint Mark was not less sensible than any other person would have been to these transporting testimonies borne to his daughter, but he never suffered his transports to appear outwardly. Never did he bestow a word of commendation upon her; he confined himself to casting upon her a look which seemed to say, "Thou hast done thy duty."

During the time that the civil troubles continued, Saint Mark had withdrawn entirely from the service; but the moment that a foreign war broke out, he felt all the fire of his youth revive in his bosom, and his resolution was instantly taken to resume his military career.

Isaura had just then entered her sixteenth year. On the departure of her father for the

army, she returned with her mother to Paris. The latter, though she had urged her husband to reappear in his former profession, suffered in secret from the absence of one whom she adored, and from her apprehensions on his account. But, anxious equally with him to uphold the glory of her country, she sought only to disguise her feelings, and to procure her daughter all the amusements suited to her age; above all, to introduce her to the acquaintance of those who were deserving of esteem, and whose society might not only be safe but instructive to her.

Saint Mark soon distinguished himself by his talents, his experience, and zeal for the cause in which he was engaged, and it was not long before he attained the rank of a general of artillery. Every moment of leisure that he could obtain from his military duties was passed with his wife and daughter, either at Paris or at their country seat in Touraine. Living in camps, and accustomed to fighting, his voice had acquired a still more masculine and imposing tone, but his heart was entirely unchanged. The happiness of seeing again a wife whom he adored, the indescribable charm he experienced in the arms of his daughter, who could never be satisfied with seeing him, every thing filled the soul of this excellent man with the most transporting sensations, the worthy recompense of a warrior returned to his fire-side.

The many amiable qualities which were united

in Isaura, added to her transcendent beauty, had drawn a crowd of admirers around her; and Madame de Saint Mark, whether from a secret presentiment that her mortal career was drawing to a close, or from the anxiety so natural in a mother to see her daughter happily settled, often solicited her husband to make a choice among them. But he, who preferred the military career to every other, refused as his son-in-law those young men who were recommended only by their wealth or rank, resolving never to give his beloved Isaura but to one of his brethren in arms who had distinguished himself in the field of honour.

However, after a stay of some months with his family, Monsieur de Saint Mark received an order to rejoin the army, and prepare for a very important campaign; one on which the future fate of France entirely depended. Never did he experience so much pain at parting from his wife; while she on her side, who had long entertained the sad idea that her end was approaching, bade him farewell with a tone of voice and manner so exquisitely affecting, that he involuntarily trembled, nor could without difficulty restrain his emotions within reasonable bounds. "How much do I lament," said Madame de Saint Mark, while tears were flowing fast down her faded cheeks, "that you have not had sufficient time allowed to choose a husband for Isaura! What will become of her, if you are cut off in battle?—or if I myself—during your absence—if this should be the last

time that I embrace you?" She could say no more, but sunk almost senseless into her husband's arms. The general, supposing this to proceed only from her regrets at the idea of their separation, endeavoured to console her; and clasping to his bosom his dear Isaura, who had been exceedingly affected with this scene, tore himself away, that they might not perceive emotions which he feared he should be no longer able to restrain.

Madame Saint Mark's presentiments were but too well founded. A short time after her husband's departure she was seized with an illness, from which her life appeared every day in increasing danger. The care and tenderness of Isaura, seconded by the aid of medicinal skill, retarded awhile the progress of the disease, but could not prevent its ultimate effect. At the end of some months this amiable woman expired in the arms of her daughter, invoking the blessings of heaven upon her. Thus was Isaura left alone, remote from her father, her only remaining protector, exposed to all the seductions which encompass beauty, to all the dangers that threaten youth and inexperience.

Though Monsieur de Saint Mark received news of his wife by almost every post; yet, as her state had been carefully concealed from him, he was far from expecting so fatal a stroke. Madame de Saint Mark had even taken the precaution of always adding a few lines to her daughter's letters, the better to remove from her husband all suspicion of his situation;

while he, surrounded by the bustle of war, and incessantly occupied by a service which scarcely left him a moment's leisure, only answered the letters with a few hasty lines.

How is it possible to paint the anguish with which this soul so full of sensibility was impressed, when on opening a letter, the hand-writing of which he could with difficulty recognise, he read these words: "You have no longer a wife, and I have no longer a mother!" Motionless, scarcely breathing, stupefied as it were by surprise and grief, three times did he read over the fatal sentence, remaining still motionless as before; when one of his brethren in arms entered his tent, and spoke to him, but received no answer. Again his friend addressed him, but the same silence was still maintained. At length he takes his hand, questioning him earnestly as to the cause of this emotion, and receives for answer the fatal letter which the mourner put into his hand, making a sign that he had lost the power of speech. This friend, who had so many times heard Saint Mark talk of his wife as his dearest treasure on earth, as the model of all the virtues united, now comprehended fully the cause of what had before so much astonished him, and endeavoured to offer him the consolation of which he stood so much in need. "Do not hope to alleviate my sufferings," at length said the general with a deep sigh: "nothing, no nothing can compensate such a loss!—And my daughter!" he added with the utmost agitation, "my dear

Isaura!—alone, abandoned amid the temptations, the seductions of Paris!—Horses! horses!—this instant must I depart.”

“Depart!” said his friend;—“impossible! I come to announce to you that the enemy advances, and that he is to be attacked to-morrow at break of day.”—“You are in the right,” answered Saint Mark: “the thunder of the cannon, the enemy by whom we are menaced, these are more powerful even than the voice of nature!—One hour only, a short hour, and you shall find me at my post.”—“Yet, Saint Mark, consent that I remain with you!”—“And why? I am armed with resolution, I am calm and resigned.”—As he pronounced these words a cold sweat ran down his cheeks. “Would to heaven,” he exclaimed, “that they were tears!—but it is impossible—’tis the heart, the heart alone!”—“Saint Mark, you rend my soul!—permit me to remain with you!”—“Well then, be it so. I must answer my daughter’s letter, I must endeavour to console my poor Isaura, I must assure her that I am not killed with this stroke of thunder:—she will with difficulty believe it.”

He sat down immediately and wrote her a long letter, in which he was often interrupted by profound sighs, and that stupefaction which arises from immoderate grief. He imprinted a kiss on the seal, and remitted it to one of his servants whom he knew to be the most devoted to him, charging him to carry it himself with all possible dispatch, and to place it in

the hands of his daughter. Then taking his sword, and leaning upon the arm of his friend, he placed the fatal letter next his heart, and went forth to the post whither he was called by duty and honour.

Isaura, meanwhile, living under the care of a respectable female friend to whom her dying mother had recommended her, occupied herself with executing her last requests. Her respected remains were removed to the country seat in Touraine, which she had chosen as their place of repose. Isaura had herself the pious fortitude to decorate with her own hands, as her father had desired, this last asylum of the best of mothers. The letter which she received from Saint Mark, giving her directions to this purpose, was her chief consolation. At the entrance of the chapel were placed two figures, one representing Hymen in tears, dropping his extinguished torch; below were engraven these words :

MY HAPPINESS IS EXTINGUISHED FOR EVER.

The other figure represented Mars, with a countenance of deep sorrow, holding in one hand the crown of Victory, in the other a wreath of cypress, with this inscription :

THE MOST BRILLIANT LAURELS CANNOT
ASSUAGE DEEP-ROOTED SORROW.

The tomb which contained the body was of black marble; above, it was ornamented with a suit of Egyptian armour, which her husband had taken from an Arab chief; the lower part,

which was raised on several steps, was covered with natural flowers such as the seasons offered, and these were renewed every day. The walls of the chapel were hung with black, ornamented with pictures representing historical facts illustrative of conjugal love. The rays of the sun never penetrated into this asylum of grief; it was illuminated only by a small sepulchral lamp suspended in the middle, which cast around a pale and mournful light. In a word, Isaura had executed scrupulously in every point all that her father had conceived for the purpose of doing honour to the manes of his wife.

The numerous successes and the brilliant victories gained by the French army to which Saint Mark was attached, and in which he signalized himself by performing prodigies of valour, at length brought a peace ardently desired by all, and it was once more in the power of this brave man to return to his own home. He was not less eager in his haste to arrive there than formerly, when after a campaign of glory he was impatient to lay his laurels at the feet of her by whom his courage was always animated. He continued his journey without ever stopping, and arrived at his house about seven in the evening, the hour at which he knew the beloved partner of his heart had breathed her last. He sprung from the carriage with the rapidity of lightning; and without speaking a word to any of the numerous persons who surrounded him blessing his return, he flew into the vestibule, ran over the different apartments, and, arriving at the chapel, shut

himself up there for several hours. Perhaps he might never have quitted it more, had not the voice and entreaties of Isaura recalled his mind for a while from the affliction in which it was plunged.

Not having expected her father till the following day, she was at the moment of his arrival in a distant part of the garden, occupied in reflecting upon the means that might be employed to console him, and repair the terrible loss he had sustained. Informed by a servant of his sudden appearance, she ran hastily to the house, seeking the cherished author of her days in every apartment, mortified at not having been on the spot to receive him. She seeks him, however, in vain, till, crossing a long gallery into which the chapel opened, and finding the door shut, she no longer doubts that her father is paying the tribute demanded of him by his heart. She dares not interrupt him ; she listens awhile in respectful silence, repressing, not without a painful effort, her ardent desire to see and embrace the only object of her affections. Half an hour, or half an age as it seemed to her, elapsed, she still listens attentively, she thinks she distinguishes deep and long protracted sighs ; and trembling for her father, well knowing the profound sensibility of his heart, she speaks, she calls him by the affectionate title of father ; but no answer is received ; she hears not the least noise. Terrified, she knocks with all her strength at the door, and cries with accents of heart-rending agony, “ My father !—O my father !

—You are returned, and I am not in your arms!—’Tis your Isaura!—Yield, O yield to her just impatience!—Do not longer deprive her of the only blessing remaining to her on earth!”

As she finished these words, Saint Mark opens the door, which he closes again after him, and takes the key. His daughter utters a cry of transport, rushes into his arms, and gives him a thousand tender kisses: but he, with fixed eyes and a mortal paleness over his whole countenance, appears insensible to her caresses, while his dry and distracted eyes seem to seek his daughter whom he holds in his arms. At length, somewhat roused from this lethargy of grief, he utters a piercing cry, and clasps her to his heart; then quitting her, and starting back some steps, he exclaims with a soul-rending accent of despair, “Yes, it is she herself!—those features!—that voice!—dear and fatal resemblance!”

“Alas!” replies Isaura with angelic sweetness, “are these features of the best of mothers given me only to augment your sorrows, to add to the just grief occasioned by such a loss?” —“Forgive me, my daughter,” he answered, “forgive an emotion which I could not repress, the irresistible effect of a resemblance so striking and so dear!—Come, O come! reanimate a heart overwhelmed with anguish, restore my distracted senses,—but in compassion do not, do not look upon me!—Let me rarely hear that voice, the sweetness of which rends my soul, the expression of which overpowers, kills me!—

O my Isaura! you can never conceive what is suffered by your unhappy father!"

From this moment, at once so sweet and so cruel, Isaura never dared to raise her eyes to her father, never dared address to him a single word. Every time that her filial piety led her into his presence, she saw him quiver with agony, a dreadful paleness spread itself over his whole countenance, and in spite of the efforts he made not to wound her sensibility, he could neither subdue nor conceal his sufferings.

These shocks, these struggles, soon preyed upon his health to such a degree as to make the tender Isaura tremble for his life. He could scarcely take any food, sleep seemed wholly to forsake his burning eyelids. A constant depression, a frightful debility, a fever without intermission, were the too certain indications of a complete disorganisation, probably of an approaching end. Isaura's cares and attentions were redoubled, but, alas! in vain: nothing could assuage the anguish of his mind; and to any words she ever addressed to him, she could obtain no other answer than "Dear and fatal resemblance!"

Every day but increasing this affectionate daughter's apprehensions on his account, she ventured to propose his quitting Touraine, and going to Paris to take the best advice that was to be procured upon his situation. "Remove hence!" he answered with a tone of agony. "Ah! who then shall come and commune with her every day? who shall strew her tomb with flowers? who shall render to these adored

remains the respectful homage which is their due? No, no! never can I quit this asylum where she reposes, but to rejoin her: there we shall no more dread the stroke of fate—in eternity we shall never be separated.”

Isaura, almost in despair at hearing this fatal resolution, yet thought it her duty to abstain from any remonstrance, even from any remark. Confining in her own bosom the sufferings which her father occasioned her, she now, as a last resource, thought of endeavouring to draw his mind from its present state of distraction by the charms of music. Among the many accomplishments which she possessed, she accompanied herself upon the harp with an expression altogether remarkable. She had often observed her father, in former times, stop to listen to her, above all when she sung the airs of Dalayrac, for which she had herself a decided preference. The physicians she consulted upon her father’s state, assured her that the only means of saving his life was to rouse him from this state of lethargic depression, into pouring forth his griefs by some outward expression; that by tears alone his mind could be relieved. Occupied entirely with this idea, Isaura essayed upon the harp such of the airs of Dalayrac as she thought would be the most favourable to her project, and at length fixed upon the music to the song of *Renaud d’Ast*, as best suited to the simplicity and melancholy which she wished her song to express. Then addressing herself to a man eminent among

the literati of the day, and a friend of her father, she imparted to him her ideas, entreating him to write words to this charming air, suited to producing upon her father the effect she desired.

This friend, equally charmed with the project of saving a life so dear, and inspired with an anxious wish to aid these pious efforts of filial affection, gladly undertook the task, yet did not find it easy to be executed. The words required to have more of soul in them than of fire, to be affecting from pure simplicity divested of all foreign ornament. Sometimes he thought that he had not well portrayed what was passing in Isaura's heart, sometimes he thought he had employed expressions too much studied, and proscribed by sentiment and nature. Nothing was more difficult than to produce emotion without suffering, nothing more arduous than to strike the heart without fatiguing the ear.

Saint Mark meanwhile sunk every day more and more into a state of stupefaction. His mind, once so powerful, began sometimes even to wander; a natural effect of the want of sleep and food. Isaura, who watched with the utmost anxiety the progress of his malady; thought that there was no more time for delay; and without permitting her friend again to retouch the stanzas which were to decide her fate, she resolved to make her experiment that very day. She stationed herself towards evening in the gallery into which the chapel

opened, it being her father's constant practice to repair thither as the clock struck seven, and, shutting himself in, to pass the greatest part of the night there. It was about the middle of September, when at that hour the gallery was lighted only by a feeble twilight which gave a great sublimity to the high and vaulted roof. As soon as Saint Mark had shut himself up with the remains of his wife, Isaura clad entirely in black, with her fine long hair hanging negligently over her shoulders, placed herself opposite the door of the chapel in a most affecting attitude, and so that she could only be seen in profile. Then accompanying herself on the harp, in a manner rendered doubly affecting by the inspiration of profound grief and filial love, she sung the first stanza.

On this fond breast I saw expire
 That form whence I deriv'd my breath ;
 Sure, to a child who truly loves,
 Such woe is twice enduring death.
 Yet while a tender mother weeping,
 My soul one cherish'd comfort shar'd ;
 That not in ev'ry way forsaken,
 To me a father yet was spar'd.

She paused a moment, and, turning her eyes towards the chapel, thought she heard a gentle movement. It was indeed Saint Mark ; who surprised, attracted by this air so affecting, by that voice so melodious, so pathetic, had half opened the door of his sanctuary, and was listening with the most eager attention. Encouraged by this first success, she resumed her attitude and continued her lay.

He comes ;—with anxious hopes t' assuage
The torments by his bosom prov'd,
The image I in haste present
Of her he'd long so fondly lov'd.
Yet, though so valued once these features,
They now increase my bosom's smart,
With woe and not with pride I bear them,
For, ah ! they rend a father's heart.

Saint Mark, impressed in spite of himself with lamentations so affecting, lent a yet more attentive ear, drawing nearer and placing himself directly behind his daughter. She, feigning not to perceive him, abandoned herself to all the emotions of her heart, in hopes of conveying similar emotions to that of her father, and making an impression which might restore him at length to her anxious vows and prayers. With a voice and manner still more and more affecting, she sung the last stanza :

Weep then with me, ye tender breasts,
Each ray of hope, of comfort's flown ;
My only trust, support, and joy,
Shuns me, and seeks for death alone.
Deserted, ev'ry way forsaken,
Amid a tortur'd husband's pains,
No more his harass'd soul remembers
That still a father he remains.

“Not remember that I am a father !” exclaimed Saint Mark, pressing her eagerly to his bosom—“Shall I forget it !—Oh, could I do so, I were the most culpable of fathers !—Yes, my child, thou hast conquered ; there is no resisting these accents of nature aided by the voice of friendship !—Behold the tears which now stream down my cheeks—they are the

first I ever shed in my life; and far from blushing at them, they at once soothe and transport me.—O let them be mingled with thine, and henceforth thou shalt not be the only one who moistens with tears the tomb of thy mother.”—As he spoke, he fell at the feet of Isaura, while she supported with transport that venerable head, rejoiced at the dawn of reviving sentiment which began to appear. She would have raised him from a posture which seemed humiliating, and have fallen in her turn at his feet: but she was afraid of interrupting emotions so precious; she trembled lest she should stop the tears which flowed in torrents from eyes so long inflexible, and which fixed upon her seemed to say, “Thy father owes thee his life!—now are our obligations reciprocal.”

This scene produced in the completest manner the effect which Isaura hoped and desired. Saint Mark, reflecting upon all that such a model of piety had suffered upon his account, did not cease to repeat, “Yes, I will live to cherish thee!—Yes, I will take care of my life!—to thee I owe it; to thee it shall be devoted:—my days are no longer my own; they are all thine, my daughter, my beloved Isaura!”

“O happiness inexpressible!” she exclaimed when her transports permitted her the power of speech. “You will then preserve your life for my sake. Heaven has blessed my efforts, and I have found once more a father!—Let us go, I entreat, let us return him our thanks

together, upon the tomb of her who from her abode of happiness inspired me with this only means of saving you."—At these words the veteran, still supported by her, accompanied her into the chapel: here the sight of the tomb, and the affecting piety of his child, drew from him another deluge of tears, though less ardent than the former, and in which he found a charm that he thought could never be too highly enjoyed.

The tender and thoughtful Isaura first exacts from him a promise, that he will never again visit the tomb alone. Afterwards she engages him only to accompany her thither in the evening, to renew the flowers and utter a short prayer. Insensibly she prevails upon him to walk with her about the gardens, then to extend his walks to the neighbouring country, and at length to visit his neighbours; till he finally returned to all his former habits, to his devotion to the arts, and love of society. Soon after he resumed his station in the army, and was promoted to a very superior rank.

Isaura, whose beauty was her least charm, in a short time united her fate with that of one of the general's young brethren in arms. She found in this union a just recompense of her virtue; and was, as her mother had been, one of the happiest of women.

Saint Mark lived to a great age. It seemed as if Heaven, by preserving to him his health and strength, justly rewarded the pious cares of his daughter. Isaura became the mother of

several children, which formed his highest delight. When he held them upon his knees, and found his own youth revive amid their caresses, he would often relate this anecdote; instructing them from it, that the more profound a person's grief is, the more does it merit the attention and forbearance of all around him, and that there is no grief so poignant, but that it may be subdued at last by patience and gentleness. In conclusion, this venerable old man, pressing his grandchildren in his arms, would say,—“ Oh, if ever your mother should experience any of those afflictions which rend the heart while they preclude tears, try to find a voice as affecting as hers, and let it sing to her some of the PATHETIC AIRS OF DALAYRAC !”

THE FAMILY DINNER,
OR
THE BOARDING-SCHOOL FRIENDS.

THE ties of friendship which are formed in youth with an ardent attachment, often relax and become weak at a more advanced age. Wealth, rank, misfortune, soon create a distance between those who for a long time thought themselves the equals of each other. It is a tax upon our pride, when we meet with a friend whose outward appearance indicates poverty. The familiarity with which he addresses us from former habit, wounds our ear, makes us blush in spite of ourselves, and is very often returned by an embarrassed coldness that seems to say, "Treat me with more respect." It is only in superior and generous minds that friendship seems to be immutable, and to inspire him who has attained to an eminent rank, with the desire of conducting himself still more familiarly towards his old friends. It is then that he experiences the delightful enjoyment reserved for true grandeur; of hearing it remarked that "prosperity has not altered him, and that he deserves all the good fortune he enjoys, all the splendour that surrounds him."

Olympia and Celina were educated from their early infancy at the same school. The conformity of their tastes and dispositions, the similarity of their age and characters, united

them in that pure and lively friendship, which, as it is the sweet exchange of our first secrets, of our first pleasures, is not easily eradicated. Olympia was the daughter of a celebrated civilian, whose talents and labours had more than once contributed to the welfare of the state. The father of Celina was a Monsieur Dorval, a distinguished literary character, but simple and modest in his manners, not ambitious of rank, satisfied with a moderate fortune, dedicating his whole time to labour, contented with the success of it, and placing his happiness in independence, study, and love of the arts. The two young friends, equal at this period both in rank and fortune, felt their attachment cemented every day, by the mutual advantage of being able to mention with honour the dear authors of their existence.

From this constantly increasing intimacy, Olympia and Celina were always seen together. They pursued the same studies, cultivated the same accomplishments. The success of one, in any of the various competitions established to excite emulation, gave the same pleasure to the other as if the reward had been decreed to herself. They also obtained permission from their parents to be always drest alike. Olympia had not a frock, nor a trinket, that Celina had not also. Nor had the latter a hat, or even a ribbon, without her friend having one like it. Nature too seemed to contribute to their union by a resemblance in their features, in their air,

and in the tone of their voices. Every body on seeing them supposed them sisters.

This enthusiastic attachment, which increased every day, was soon strengthened by gratitude. Olympia was attacked by a disease from which her life was in danger. Of all the attentions that were paid to her, there was none equal to the constant and active watchfulness of Celina, who sat up several nights with her friend, and contributed more than any thing to her recovery. This event filled these inseparable friends with such delight, that it was difficult to decide, whether she who could say to the other, "I have saved your life," or she who repeated continually, "I owe my life to you," was the most happy.

Nothing interrupted this intimacy while they continued at school, which they both hoped to leave on the same day. This time arrived sooner than they had expected. The father of Olympia, in consequence of his signal services and high reputation, was called to an eminent situation, and raised to all the dignities that do honour to merit and virtue. Obligated to leave his private habitation and inhabit a magnificent hotel attached to his important post, he took his only daughter with him, that she might be accustomed to greatness without being dazzled by it. Olympia was then sixteen; and the emulation of friendship having developed the talents with which she was endowed, her education was nearly completed,

when summoned by her parents she left the happy asylum where her childhood had been past. Celina, who, after the agreement made between them, would have remained with regret in the place that was no longer inhabited by her friend, easily obtained permission of her father and mother to leave her school, and on the day appointed the two inseparables quitted it together. They parted with many tears, and with mutual protestations of a friendship which was to cease but with their lives.

Olympia went to her father's hotel, where she found an apartment prepared for her. It consisted of a sleeping-room, a dressing-room, and a study. The furniture of each was of the newest fashion, and very splendid; added to which there was a variety of articles merely ornamental. The collection of books were of the best authors, richly bound, and there was a superb piano forte. It was the mother of Olympia who had taken a pleasure in thus decorating her apartment, where her blind fondness had united in every thing the height of taste and opulence.

Celina was far from finding the same things in the apartment that she occupied with her parents. It consisted but of one room, the neatness of which was its principal ornament. The furniture was plain and useful. On one side of the chimney there was a portrait of Olympia, on the other that of Monsieur Dorval, and in different places some drawings representing the

principal scenes from the dramatic works of the latter.

A few days after the two friends were established with their respective parents, Olympia, impatient to show her splendid apartment to Celina, came to see her, and with all the warmth of her usual affection carried her back to dinner at her father's hotel, where this amiable girl met with the most flattering reception. She was scarcely arrived, before her friend led her into her sleeping-room, and made her observe every thing with which it was decorated; then into her dressing-room; and lastly, into her study. Celina, dazzled with all that she saw, congratulated her happy companion on the richness and elegance of the whole; but without enthusiasm, and without appearing to desire any thing of the kind. Of all that she saw, nothing attracted her so much as the excellent piano forte, and a collection of fine music. She sat down immediately to play, and ran over the works of the most celebrated composers; when, in the midst of the enjoyment in which she was thus absorbed, a livery-servant came to announce that the dinner was upon table. Olympia could scarcely get her friend away from the piano, and was extremely surprised that she was so taken up with that, and not more in ecstasies with every thing else in her apartment. She conducted her to the dinner-table, and began secretly to observe for the first time, the distance at which their present situations now placed them.

After dinner she proposed to Celina to go to the wood of Boulogne in a chariot with her mother. "Oh! with pleasure," said Celina with the greatest naïveté: "I have never been at that charming place, and it will be quite a treat to me. But," added she, "I am dressed very plain, and according to our agreement you must be dressed like me, and therefore you will be obliged to appear at this assemblage of all the fine company in Paris, in a dress like mine."—"What does that signify?" replied Olympia hesitating and colouring: "I intend.....I must keep to our agreement: I will go and dress myself like you." So saying, she put on a simple muslin gown, a straw hat tied with a white ribbon, and a silk handkerchief. They got into the carriage; and were soon in the beautiful walks of the wood of Boulogne, where every body took them for two boarders from a convent. Olympia was very much mortified at not being yet known, though she endeavoured as much as possible to conceal her chagrin. In the evening, when Celina returned home, she spoke warmly in praise of her friend, and assured her parents that nothing could ever lessen the affectionate attachment between them.

Some time after Olympia, having been making visits with her mother, called on Celina in her way home, who now in her turn wished to detain her friend. "I cannot offer you," she said, "a ride in a chariot to the wood of Boulogne, but I can on my part take you this

evening to the first representation of a comic opera, the music of which is by our most celebrated composers."—Olympia accepted the invitation, professing that this evening would be much more agreeable to her than that they had spent in the wood of Boulogne, where she had not been at all amused. But the two friends had now a difficulty to adjust.—Olympia, who had been making ceremonious visits, was in a very elegant dress. Celina had nothing like it in her whole wardrobe. It was necessary, therefore, that Olympia should renounce her handsome dress, and put on another like that of her friend ; who not supposing that any thing could break a sacred compact of friendship, actually went, in the simplicity of her heart, to bring down a dress similar to her own, which she unfolded and showed to Olympia for her approbation.

Monsieur Dorval, accustomed to see through the disguises of nature into its real character, perceived the mortification of Olympia, which indeed she could but ill conceal, and observed promptly to his daughter, that the conformity of dress they had contracted the habit of at school, was become impossible now they lived separately in the world. Then addressing her friend, he said to her in the most conciliating manner, " I can imagine, madam, what pain it will cost you to break the engagement that you have made with my daughter ; but the high rank to which your father has been so justly raised, will no longer permit you to con-

tinue the uniform dress that your tender friendship had made it a custom between you to adopt. This would require that you should descend to imitate Celina in her dress, as she could never pretend to imitate yours; and where there is no longer an equality of sacrifices, there is no longer an equality of enjoyments. Take my advice, disengage each other from the agreement, and henceforth let your attachment consist rather in a conformity of sentiments than of dress."

Olympia, delighted with Monsieur Dorval's observations, coloured, but did not dare to be the first to acquiesce in them. Celina, conscious of their justness, yielded to them immediately; and taking the hand of her friend, which she pressed to her heart, said to her with a mild dignity, "It is for me to break a treaty which I cannot maintain upon equal terms with you. I give you back your promise, fully assured that under the richest, as under the simplest dress, I shall always find the friend of my childhood, my dear and amiable Olympia." Olympia replied only by pressing Celina to her breast, and kissing her with a cordial affection. They then set out for the comic opera, not in an elegant chariot, but in a shabby hackney coach; and the two inseparables appeared for the first time in public differently drest.

From this time Olympia, who was no longer subject to a restriction that thwarted her coquetry and wounded her pride, came more frequently to visit her friend; and whether it

might be that friendship had still some claims upon her heart, or that she no where found more real pleasure than in her conversations with the amiable Celina, she frequently passed whole days with her. Monsieur Dorval took great pleasure in varying their amusements, sometimes by reading or reciting to them, both for the purpose of instruction and entertainment; and Olympia listened to him with the more lively interest, as she took advantage of what she thus acquired to make a figure in company. Celina, taking this interest for that of friendship, never ceased to repeat that nothing could lessen the affectionate attachment that united them. . . . She was still further confirmed in this opinion one day when Olympia came to see her, by her turning the conversation on the mutual happiness they enjoyed; when looking at the drawings from Monsieur Dorval's works, which hung in Celina's room, she said to her, "Do you know, my dear, that notwithstanding all the splendour in which I live, your lot is almost as brilliant as mine? I would willingly change the decorations of my apartment for that honourable collection."

"It is very certain," replied Celina, "that decorations of this kind are not common. I would not however exchange them for all the showy ornaments in the world. Nothing can be more gratifying than to run over at a glance whatever recalls to one's mind the cherished author of one's existence! These are real treasures, and the opinion of the public confirms to me every

day that I am justified in being proud of them.” —“ Really,” observed Olympia, “ your sleeping-room, though simple and without any pretensions, is very delightful.” —“ Your portrait, my dear friend, is not one of its least ornaments. It is a strong likeness. I frequently surprise myself with my eyes fixed upon that dear image, it seems to smile and speak to me.” —“ If this be the case,” exclaimed Olympia starting up, “ I must write upon it what I was to be understood as saying to you in this portrait. You know it was done soon after that terrible illness of which I should have died but for your affectionate attentions. . . .” Then taking a pen and ink and going up to the picture, she hastily wrote these words upon the frame—“ I owe my life to you.” —Celina, affected by this tribute to her friendship, could not resist the emotion which she felt, and pressing her friend to her heart she again repeated with rapture, “ Never, no never, can any thing lessen the affectionate attachment that unites us !”

Monsieur Dorval, who had witnessed this kind and cordial effusion, believed for the moment that he had mistaken the character of Olympia, and flattered himself that his daughter would retain her friend. He was however soon undeceived ; but unwilling to impart his fears to Celina, who was more than ever blinded by her partiality, he left her to experience for herself the conviction he expected. It was not long before she actually began to

experience it. She soon found that she saw her friend much less frequently than usual. Olympia then agreed to give her notice what days they could meet. Their meetings were next fixed to twice a week, then to every Sunday.

“As we receive company or go out almost every evening,” said Olympia soon after this, “if you wish that we should spend some time together, come to me in the morning. The great world occasions so many embarrassments, and so much employment,—in the morning you understand, my dear, as soon as breakfast is over.” Celina, always amiable and confiding, took a pleasure in conforming herself to the wishes of her friend, nor was offended that the frequent visits she made Olympia were by no means punctually returned. After a while, however, she was sometimes told when she went that Olympia was not at home, and she soon remarked that when they did meet there was an air of restraint in her manner which she endeavoured in vain to disguise. Celina had too much sensibility not to feel this, but too much spirit to complain of it. She concealed her chagrin, therefore, and resolved to hazard a final proof that might satisfy her as to the real state of the case.

For more than a month Olympia had dexterously avoided every occasion of asking Celina to dinner. The latter at first saw only in this neglect the involuntary effect of the constant dissipation in which her friend lived: but determined to know the real motive of it, she said

one day to her parents that she would go to her friend on the following Wednesday, a day on which she knew that Olympia's father always received a great deal of company. She dressed herself with studied simplicity, and attended by Monsieur Dorval's old servant went to her friend, to whom she said on her arrival : " My father and mother being obliged to be absent on some business, I am come, my dear, to take a family dinner with you."—" I am happy to see you," answered Olympia colouring, who had just finished dressing herself in a most superb manner ; " but I must inform you that we have a great deal of company, and some people of very high rank."—" That does not signify, I shall still be with you."—" Certainly, but etiquette—we shall not be able to converse at all:—stop a moment, however, I will go and inform my mother of your arrival, and arrange every thing as well as I can." She now quitted the room abruptly, leaving Celina confuted, and more than half convinced that the pride of grandeur had alienated Olympia, and that she had no longer a friend.

Olympia did really go to her mother, and made her believe, that her dear Celina not being sufficiently drest positively refused to appear amongst the company, and desired therefore that they might have some dinner in her apartment, at which she would preside, and give up appearing at the grand dinner rather than lose the company of her friend. Returning then to the latter, she told her that her mother was

afraid she would find a ceremonious dinner where she knew nobody, very dull, and would not besides. probably, like to appear at it without being more dressed. For these reasons she proposed their having a family dinner in her apartment, which should be served at an early hour, and every attention should be paid to rendering it comfortable and agreeable to her.

Celina read at once in the countenance of Olympia, that this step had no other object than to avoid introducing to her company the unknown daughter of a private literary man, modestly dressed. In her first emotion she would have withdrawn, but this might have occasioned some disturbance; and moreover, all the servants of the family were too much engaged for any one of them to have attended her home. Reflecting also that she must urge her proof to the utmost, she pretended to believe all that Olympia had said to her, and accepted her proposal. The latter, who thought only of getting rid of her unwelcome guest, in order to appear amongst the company as soon as she was gone, gave her orders immediately; and about half past four some rice soup was brought and set upon a very small table. Olympia took a napkin with a plate and spoon upon her knee, and, seating herself by it, invited Celina to do the same. As the grand dinner was not to be till six o'clock, and the preparations for it of course were not yet ready, this family dinner consisted only of what had been left the day before. After the soup, there were served in succession

the remains of a cold fowl, two roasted pigeons both cold and dry, an artichoke, and two cups of sour custard. The dessert was no better than the dinner.

The sensibility of Celina struggling at this moment with her indignation made it difficult to conceal what she felt. She ate little : she did not venture to look up, for fear of betraying her feelings to Olympia, who sought every possible means of abridging this miserable dinner. Celina, inferring from these appearances that there was an end of all real friendship between them, feigned a slight indisposition, and soon returned home attended by one of the women servants of the family. What she had really suffered, united with her efforts to conceal it, had such an effect upon her, that when she got home she could not repress her feelings any longer, but gave way to the relief of a flood of tears. On retiring to her room she looked up at the portrait of Olympia, and resting her eye on the inscription under it, "I owe my life to you," she started involuntarily, and catching up a pen added these words : "And I have wounded your feelings."

Her father came into the room just as her trembling hand had finished this new inscription. The sight of these words, and the dejected countenance of Celina, whose eyes were still moist with tears, fully assured him that her inseparable friend had at last completely betrayed the egotism and pride of which he had suspected her ; and pressing his daughter to

explain the cause of her uneasiness, she gave him a minute detail of what had passed.—“ I am not surprised at it,” said this faithful painter of vice and absurdity, “ it is so difficult to resist the intoxications of wealth and grandeur !” —“ Who could have imagined,” observed Celina with her eyes fixed on the portrait of her friend, “ that with those features, and that interesting expression of affectionate gratitude, any body could have outraged in such a manner the friend of their childhood !” —“ They ought at least,” retorted Monsieur Dorval to amuse her chagrin, “ to have given you a good dinner ! But two roasted pigeons of the day before, and two cups of sour custard, were rather too little ; rather a poor family dinner. . . . Be assured that I sincerely sympathize with you, my dear Celina ; but what has happened to you to-day, has happened to me more than once in my life. Friends, at least what are often supposed so, are easy to make, but difficult to retain.”

Olympia, who could not resist the consciousness of Celina’s being hurt by her behaviour, and who was not imposed upon by her pretended sudden indisposition, sent her waiting-woman the next morning to inquire after her. Celina coldly returned for answer, that she was much better, that her indisposition was occasioned only by the dinner having disagreed with her. These words were repeated literally to Olympia ; who being then fully convinced that her friend was hurt at her behaviour, called some days after

with her mother, to do away what she considered only as a passing cloud.

Celina was sitting with her father when the ladies were announced. After entreating him not to say any thing that might lead to an explanation, she ran to her room, took down the portrait of Olympia on which she had added her inscription, and put it into a wardrobe. Accustomed to fulfil the duties of friendship, her generous and indulgent mind, forgetting at this moment the outrage she had received, did not wish yet to punish her less generous friend. Olympia never was more humble and insinuating. She was so animated, and so adroit in managing the conversation, that it was impossible to advert to the subject of the *family dinner*. Taking advantage of a moment when her mother, a woman of real value, was engaged in discourse with Monsieur Dorval, she took Celina to her room for the purpose of coming to an explanation with her.

"You went away very abruptly, my dear, the other day," she began.

"I did not wish to prevent your appearing at your grand dinner, particularly as you might assist your mother in doing the honours of it."

"Were you offended at her proposing your dining in my apartment?"

"Believe me, I know better how to do justice to your excellent mother, and that I feel no resentment on her account."

"You cannot imagine from what a weight

you relieve me. . . . But I do not see my portrait here !”

“ An unexpected event had altered the features and the likeness ; and I have sent it to have them restored again.”

“ I am very glad of it. You know that it is very gratifying to me to be placed in my friend's room, especially on account of the inscription which was inspired by the sincerest gratitude.— Oh ! that inscription is ever present to my mind.—But what is the matter, Celina ? You are quite lost in thought.”

“ You know the twenty-fourth of the month is my father's birth-day, when we have a large party of literati, of artists, and of very delightful women ; which occasions me a good deal of employment. But we forget that your mother is left tête-à-tête with my father ; and though I trust she will not find it fatiguing, I should be sorry to keep her waiting.”

They now returned into the other room, where Olympia again endeavoured to enliven the conversation ; but she did not succeed in it so well as to convince Monsieur Dorval, but that it was she alone who was guilty of the outrage towards his daughter. He was perfectly satisfied that her parents were too sensible and amiable, and had too much good manners, to refuse admitting the daughter of a literary man to their table.

On her return home Olympia reflected on the cold reception Celina had given her, and could not but infer from it that she felt some

resentment for the manner in which she had treated her. Wishing to efface every remembrance of it, she determined to take the opportunity of the fête for the birth-day of her friend's father, to give her to understand, that she did not think there was any distinction of rank and situation between them. She therefore made her parents believe that Monsieur and Madame Dorval had invited her to the party that they were to have on the twenty-fourth; and on that day, simply but elegantly drest, she went about three o'clock to Celina; to whom she said on her arrival, in the most insinuating manner, "The birth-day of my friend's father cannot be indifferent to me; I come to propose sharing with you the cares and the enjoyments of this happy day, and to ask you to give me a dinner."

Celina, although surprised at this step, embraced Olympia, and could not resist caressing her with kindness, after which she went to apprize her parents of her being there.—"How!" said Monsieur Dorval, "she come to ask a dinner of you!"—"Yes," replied Celina, "and she has done it in so graceful and kind a manner, that it has quite disarmed me."

"I know, my daughter, that there must be indulgence in friendship; but I think at the same time that you are too sensible of what is due to yourself, to fear giving the proud Olympia the rough lesson she deserves. Return to her, I will take this matter upon myself." He rang immediately for his old faithful servant,

and said to him, "My good Joseph, could not you procure immediately a couple of pigeons that were roasted yesterday, but the smallest and the driest that are to be had?"—"What can you want, sir, with this dainty dish?"—"Do what I desire, and at the proper time you shall have your instructions. Stop a moment, tell Margaret that at five o'clock precisely I shall want two cups of sour custard."—"Sour custard!"—"Yes, sour. It may be very easily made so by means of a little cream of tartar, or lemon juice."—"I will go and tell my wife, but I will not answer for it that she will consent to make the custard sour. And then she has so much to do this morning."—"I will myself explain this to her. Do you attend to getting me what I want."

During this conversation Celina was with Olympia in her own room, talking of the amusements that her father's friends always prepared for his birth-day.—"And cannot I join you," said Olympia, "and testify to your worthy father the real esteem that I feel for him?"

"A word from your mouth, or a flower from your hand, will be sufficient," replied Celina.

"Where," asked Olympia looking up, "is my portrait? is it not repaired yet? was it so very much altered?"—"Oh yes, very much—but I hope we shall succeed in getting it quite right again."

As they were talking in this manner, a mes-

sage was brought to Celina that Monsieur Dorval wanted her. Olympia was left alone, and began congratulating herself on the project she had thought of to take her friend by surprise, and already proposed to herself to attract the attention of all the company. But what was her astonishment when Celina returning said to her with an embarrassed air, and changing colour in a manner that expressed all the pain she suffered, "I come, my dear, to acquaint you with a scruple of my father's that I myself cannot blame: he thinks that the high rank of your father does not permit you, his only daughter, to mix with authors and artists; and he has commissioned me to propose to you, to dine tête-à-tête with me here in my room."

At these words Olympia turned pale. She began to doubt whether the insult, all traces of which she had flattered herself were now effaced, was not still present to the mind of Monsieur Dorval, and that he meant on this occasion to revenge himself for it. This doubt was immediately changed into certainty when she saw the faithful Joseph, whose significant smile betrayed that he knew the whole affair, come in about half past four with a little table on which there was a rice soup. He then presented a seat and a plate and spoon to the fair Olympia, who found herself obliged in her turn to imitate Celina and eat upon her knee. In a word, the old servant brought one after the other the same dishes that Olympia

had given to Celina. When he set the pigeons and the sour custard upon the table, old Joseph looked quite delighted ; and wishing to add to the revenge of his young mistress, he would have burst into a laugh, if he had not been restrained by the sufferings that were visible in the countenance of Celina. The dessert that succeeded this dinner, was in every respect an exact counterpart of that which had been served by Olympia.

The latter, who read in the eyes of her friend how much it cost her to obey her father, would not increase her sufferings by an explanation. She feigned therefore not to perceive any thing, and, arming herself with courage and resolution, preserved during dinner the best countenance possible. Celina on her side, desirous to atone to Olympia for the cruel mortification she endured, sought to divert her attention, by recalling to her mind the time they had passed together at school, and the many little adventures in which they had been engaged there. Seven o'clock at length struck ; when Monsieur Dorval, who had already collected in the drawing-room several of the persons invited for the evening, hastened to seek the two friends, and addressing himself to the lovely Olympia, who cast down her eyes on seeing him, said : “ Now, Mademoiselle, since I have assembled together several persons of distinction who do not despise the society of literati, I entreat you to do me the honour of accepting

my hand, and that you will make one of the party at the entertainment, which will be much embellished by your presence."

He then conducted her to the drawing-room, where she soon found herself surrounded by a crowd of the most eminent persons in literature and the arts, all endeavouring to show her the utmost attention, to render her their homage, to pay her their tribute of applause. After a concert composed of all that Paris afforded the most perfect in its kind, several little *proverbs** were played, and at length a musical piece, in which the principal character, who had received a hint from Monsieur Dorval, gave the most flattering portrait of Olympia's father, describing him as deserving alike of the confidence of his sovereign and of general esteem. This happy idea received universal applause. The inseparable could not resist the stroke, but even suffered tears to steal down her cheeks: these were imputed by the company to filial love; but the real cause of them was piercing remorse for having insulted two hearts, which she was now constrained to acknowledge were more noble and generous than her own.

An elegant supper succeeded, from which were banished all ceremony and ostentation, where every one seated themselves promiscuously without any attention to rank or distinction. *Bons mots*, lively sallies, witticisms flew

* A particular sort of little French dramatic pieces.

about on all sides, without the least violation of good manners, or offence to modesty. They were soon interrupted by some ingenious verses celebrating the union of the arts; and Celina, at a hint given by her father, sung a new song, written by him, upon the duties of friendship, to which was this striking burden,

The happiness of our lives is often lost,
By one moment of forgetfulness.

Olympia, placed opposite to Monsieur Dorval, proved by her blushes that she felt all the force of the application, while he cast a look upon her which seemed to say, "'Tis thus that we revenge ourselves."

At length the company rose from table, and danced till day began to break, when a servant appeared and announced that he came to conduct Olympia home. Celina and her father accompanied her to the carriage; when the inseparable, stopping as she descended the staircase, said, "O how guilty you have rendered me in my own eyes!"—Then pressing the hands of Dorval, she added in a tone of supplication, "If I have any claims on your indulgence, promise me, sir, O promise me not to communicate to my father and mother the wrongs of which I have been guilty towards Celina!—Never never would they pardon me." At these words she embraced her friend, who pressed her in her arms in a manner which showed that every thing was already forgotten. Olympia redoubled her acknowledgements and protestations; and having received from

Dorval the assurance that her parents should never know what had passed, she gives and receives a kiss, gets into her carriage and disappears.

“ I was in the right,” said Celina with transport, “ when I said that my friend would be restored to me, and I may now erase the painful inscription which I had added to her picture.”—“ Do not be in too much haste,” said Dorval, who had earnestly watched every movement of Olympia. “ Fear and confusion are the only sentiments by which she is inspired, and her pride has suffered so much the more, from finding herself humiliated by those who are, in her eyes, so much her inferiors.”—“ Yet, my father, her confusion while I sung the burden of your song, that blush which overspread her whole countenance” “ Were but the effect of spite and shame. I saw nothing of that true repentance, that throwing off her former self which I expected: her eyes were dry, while yours were filled with tears.”

The event proved this opinion to be but too well founded. Olympia never saw Celina again without a restraint which she sought in vain to dissemble; while the latter could not avoid feeling that, if friendship can pardon an injury, it is not always in its power to forget it. By degrees the two inseparables saw less and less of each other, and concluded by avoiding as much as possible all occasions of meeting. Celina was the first who made it a

point of duty to herself, to break off the connection entirely ; and when her father redoubled his tenderness in hopes of consoling her for the loss of the friend of her infancy, he never ceased to say, “ Friendship, my child, is a faithful mirror, which cannot suffer the least impure breath to come upon it. Remember that nothing is more rare than a perfect and mutual friendship, and that it is never to be found at all but among equals.”

THE CHARM OF A SWEET VOICE.

THE young Arthur of Weymar was one of the most distinguished pupils at the military school of St. Cyr. He was early in his career of arms named sub-lieutenant in a regiment of cavalry, having first attracted the particular notice of his superior officers by his bravery and exact attention to all the regulations required by military discipline. But the officer whose favour he had engaged above all others was the Count de Saint Geran, a general, and a man of high rank, by whom he was appointed his aide-de-camp. Arthur, enraptured with this honour no less than with the proofs of warm attachment which he daily received from the Count, signalized himself still more, and proved himself on numerous occasions the worthy pupil of the celebrated institution where he had received his education.

In one of those memorable engagements which are decisive at once of the fate of a country and of the glory of its sovereign, Arthur, then scarcely eighteen years old, fought near the side of his benefactor, the Count de Saint Geran. At a moment when a party of the enemy had surrounded the general, and he was on the point of becoming their prisoner, the young aide-de-camp rushed into the midst of

them, and, killing several, succeeded in rescuing the Count from their hands. But the horse of the latter having been killed under him, and he himself being grievously wounded, he was unable to complete his own deliverance by hastening from the pursuit of the enemy, and saw himself on the verge of falling again into their power. Arthur, who had for some time supported his tottering steps, seeing the danger, led him to the trunk of a tree which lay just by, and, mounting him upon it, took him upon his shoulders and bore him away in safety ; thus renewing the scene of the gallant Turenne, who in like manner once bore off a common soldier from the field of battle.

Arthur obtained no small degree of credit among the whole army for this gallant action, and in the evening of the same day received a summons to attend in the general's tent. "Come hither, my excellent friend," said the Count, "for henceforward I can give you no other appellation. Have you not told me that you were an orphan, without any hope of fortune?"—"It is true indeed, general ; but he who has the honour of serving under your orders has found a father, and is in no want of any thing."

"I too am without a family ; never was I united in the sweet bonds of marriage, nor knew the charm of being a father. While you fought by my side, your blood mingling with mine assured me that in you I had found a true, a real son. Accept then that title as a

pledge of my eternal gratitude: accept this paper, 'tis a legal act by which I adopt you, by which you are made the heir of him who henceforward wishes to be called by no other title than that of your father." At these words the young Arthur threw himself into the Count's arms, evincing by his caresses, and numberless expressions of gratitude, that he was deeply impressed with the honours he received, and not unworthy of them.

From this moment the Count never ceased to receive from his adopted son all the respect and affection which he could have received from a real one; all those kind attentions with which filial love inspires a man of honour, with which it animates a generous and sensible heart. Not long after, he had the gratification of seeing that a sense of the young Weymar's merits was not confined to his breast alone, as he was promoted to the rank of a captain in the army.

It seemed as if the higher this young man advanced in his profession, the more anxious he became to justify those who promoted him, by giving new proofs of his genius and courage. How many times was he of the greatest assistance to the general in the most distinguished actions he performed! how often was the fate of the battle decided by the troops which he commanded! But this happiness was not of long duration. In an engagement by night, when the dangers are redoubled in proportion to the courage of the combatants, the

Count de Saint Geran was killed by the bursting of a bomb, having only time to exclaim as he expired in the arms of his adopted child, "I die content, since I leave a son worthy of me."

Young Weymar was under the deepest affliction at this loss. In vain did these last words so honourable to him, in vain did the inheritance of a large fortune and an illustrious name, offer themselves as sources of consolation; he could think only of the loss he had sustained, he could only repeat continually; "I have no longer a benefactor, no longer a father."—He was mistaken however as to the former; for a very short time after the Count's death, the marshal who commanded in chief announced to him, that the sovereign approving the Count de Saint Geran's adoption of him, and desirous that so great a name should not be lost to the French army, had appointed him colonel of the regiment in which he had long served, and granted him the same arms, dignities, and privileges as the late Count had enjoyed. Arthur thus became Count de Saint Geran, and found himself at the age of twenty-seven a colonel, and the owner of a very large property.

But the honours conferred upon him had not the least ill effect on his general character; he was not unreasonably elevated by them, or rendered haughty and arrogant. Always simple in his tastes, and modest in his manners, he concealed under the utmost mildness of ex-

terior, the courage and impetuosity by which he was distinguished on the field of battle. At his return to Paris he hastened to visit the military school at Saint Cyr, which he always regarded as the cradle of his good fortune; and above all to pay his respects to the venerable chief of the institution, whom he designated as his first guide in the career of honour.

Received at the house of Madame de Surville, his relation, a woman of the most distinguished merit in all Paris, he there met a great number of young ladies, among whom he thought of choosing a wife. But fearing lest he might fall into some error in making his choice, he entreated Madame de Surville to assist him with her judgement, which from her great knowledge of the world could not fail of being very valuable. "I would not," says he, "take as my companion for life, one of those women who place all their happiness in show, and in dazzling the persons around them with a display of opulence; nor would I have one of those imperious coquettes who regard the sacred bonds of Hymen but as a tie of convenience, and imagine that they are only to offer upon his altar such a kind of worship as suits their fancies and caprices. I would have for my wife a young woman, who, without being handsome, shall have an expressive countenance, with a modest demeanour, and a genteel education, yet free from arrogant pretensions to talents or accomplishments; whose acquirements shall charm rather than dazzle.

Above all, let the sweetness of her voice be the faithful interpreter of her soul. I would have her without fortune and of a numerous family; that they may be participators in the blessings which Heaven has lavished upon me. Deign, my cherished friend, then," added the young Count, pressing the hands of Madame de Surville, "to introduce me, if possible, to such an object; it is one which I must flatter myself is not entirely an ideal creation of my own, but may be found among your sex, and you will have contributed in no slight degree to the happiness of my life."

Madame de Surville, impressed with the wish of rendering two people happy, invited into her circle of visitors all the young women who appeared to possess the qualities, or at least a part of those required by the Count. At first some were presented to him, who imagining themselves already on the road to being united to a noble and a colonel, whose name, rank, and fortune flattered their vanity, suffered the ambition they felt to shine in the world, to become persons of distinction, and to frequent the court, to appear too manifestly. Saint Geran immediately pronounced their doom, and set them aside from the class among whom his choice was to be made. Madame de Surville afterwards contrived to enlist among her habitual society three young ladies who appeared particularly to attract the Count's attention. Adriana, only daughter to the widow of a celebrated physician, united to the most

interesting countenance a modesty, and a sweetness of voice which announced the utmost goodness of heart. But Saint Geran soon remarked, that this sweetness, which charmed so much at first, was carried to such a degree of insipidity and indifference, as announced even coldness of disposition and a total absence of character. Euphemia was an orphan, and niece to one of the first lawyers in Paris. To dazzling beauty she added the highest degree of natural grace and sweetness of expression. At first sight, immediate credit might be given her for a heart full of frankness, candour, affection, and sensibility ; but the moment she spoke, the eye was disenchanted by the ear. A rough hoarse voice, and a vulgarity of expression, dissipated in an instant the favourable impression made by her beauty, and formed altogether a discordance of character to which it was impossible ever to be reconciled.

Eliza, who was the daughter of a painter of distinguished eminence in the French school, seemed at first to bear away the palm from the others by that *tout-ensemble* which attracts, which flatters, which interests. Her countenance without being strictly handsome had yet in it something indescribably charming ; in stature she was tall, her figure was majestic, and her carriage graceful, while the tone of her voice, without being positively seductive, found its way insensibly to the heart. Yet an unconquerable petulance, and a perfect mania to be always talking, which leads inevitably to

uttering a great deal of nonsense, clouded over the attractions by which she was distinguished. Her heart was excellent, her intentions pure; yet any one might be led to consider her as of that class of gossips whose society is always dangerous, or as an enthusiast incapable of cherishing lasting sentiments. Unfortunately, too, it happened that when she most desired to please, she became the most insupportable; her physiognomy then assumed the most disadvantageous expression; the grace and majesty of her figure were exchanged for awkward and constrained attitudes; and her voice became so shrill and disagreeable, that she even fatigued those who had before listened to her with pleasure.

These defects could not escape the Count's penetration; but whether he thought that they might be easily corrected, or whether they were compensated in his eyes by many amiable qualities, it was remarked that he sought to combat the one by pronouncing the eulogium of the other, and his partiality to her seemed daily to increase. Madame de Surville, to whom he could not forbear communicating his sentiments, though as yet she was the only person intrusted with them, thought it her duty, before the affair was carried any further, to consult the young lady's parents. They evinced the utmost transport at the idea, and were impatient to see their daughter the wife of a man so distinguished. Without therefore telling her positively that the Count de Saint

Geran had asked her in marriage, they gave her to understand that he was suspected to be attached to her, and was thought to be looking about for a wife.

Eliza, on whose heart the Count had really made a strong impression, not merely by his rank and fortune, but by that high reputation for bravery which has in it something peculiarly attractive to every bosom inspired by generous feelings, emboldened by the hints she received from her parents, began now to play off all her artillery, in hopes of completing her conquest, and bringing the Count to a formal declaration. Abandoning herself wholly to the vivacity of her imagination, and to the natural disposition of her heart, she was incessantly talking of those heroes who exposed their lives in the service of their country, and saying how charming and how respectable they appeared in her eyes. She pronounced long and elaborate eulogiums on the numerous list of warriors who are considered as the pride and boast of France ; she enumerated with equal eloquence and fidelity, the many brilliant actions which acquired their names a place in the temple of Memory ; she dilated on the happiness which must be experienced in being connected with them, in being associated with their dangers, their successes ; in following them in idea to the field of honour, in invoking Heaven for their preservation, in hearing their names blessed by a whole people, their victories proclaimed by the sovereign himself ; in finding

the esteem of contemporaries and the veneration of posterity attached to their names.

Saint Geran could not conceal the surprise and delight with which he listened to her. Carried away by the force of the pictures which she was daily pourtraying and admiring, by the enthusiasm with which she seemed inspired; he thought in his ecstasies that he had never seen any one who could be compared with the charming Eliza. "How can one resist," said he, "that brilliant imagination!—how avoid being deeply penetrated by that soul so full of fire, which astonishes, enchants, electrifies its hearers!—Oh, she deserves indeed to be the wife of a warrior."—But no sooner did reflection succeed to these first emotions, than he could not refrain from remarking, that this heroic ardour was carried beyond all reason; that those contortions of the body, those eyes flashing with eagerness, destroyed all grace, even wounded modesty; and finally that the shrill voice, and excess of volubility which scarcely left its hearers time for breathing, were not to be compared with that charm possessed by mildness and gentleness of accent, with the irresistible power attached to timidity and modesty. If he felt that the coldness and insensibility of Adriana could not penetrate to his heart, he felt that Eliza made too much noise and clamour to be permitted to remain there long. That fleeting love which is created by the fancy, and destroyed by caprice, kindles a sudden and ardent flame which burns for a

moment, and then is extinguished for ever ; while the pure passion inspired by delicacy and upheld by prudence, though it penetrates only gradually into the soul, yet kindles there a steady and sober flame to be extinguished but with the stroke that extinguishes life itself.

The Count now found that he had a terrible combat to sustain within himself. In order to have leisure for reflecting more deliberately upon what was to be done, without being dazzled by the presence of Eliza, who every day was more and more full of her grand sentiments and heroic citations, he resolved to absent himself for some days, and accompany Madame de Surville to a country house she had not far from Ecoen. This lady's errand was to take from a boarding-school in that town, a young lady who had been for several years a pupil there, and who was now to return to her mother's house near Angers. Madame de Surville, having been long the friend of Madame de Saint Ange, had undertaken to receive the young Annette from the hands of her governess, and, after detaining her a short time as her own guest, to place her herself in the arms of her mother.

Annette, the eldest daughter of an officer of engineers who had lost his life in the field of honour, was one of those beings who does not at the first glance excite the least attention, but whom no one could abstain from contemplating continually, after having once taken the pains to examine her character. She was just

eighteen years of age, of a middling stature, but well proportioned; her air and carriage were so perfectly unassuming, that no particular grace was to be discerned in them, but they were equally free from every thing that approached to awkwardness. Every movement was easy and natural, announcing rather retiredness and timidity than an anxiety to please. She had a low forehead, a large mouth but ornamented with beautiful teeth, and her eyes were small and always cast down. Her complexion, never fine, appeared somewhat injured by study, and her cheeks wanted colour very much: in a word, her face was composed of elements, which taken separately were all defective, but a single look from her was sufficient to annihilate the power of saying that she was ugly.

When Madame de Surville, accompanied by the Count de Saint Geran, came to take her from the school, her governess, a woman of such a character as that commendation from her was indeed a high eulogium, pressed the orphan in her arms, and said with a manner that showed her deeply affected, “I consign to you, madam, the most beloved among my pupils; I am deceived indeed, if she will not prove one of the choicest of blessings to her poor widowed mother.”—Annette would fain have made some reply, but her voice was stifled by the tears which flowed fast from her eyes: kissing the hands therefore, and receiving the blessing of her who had long been in the place

of a mother, she accompanied Madame de Surville in silence. This lady returned the same evening to Paris.

Saint Geran, who at the first glance had considered Annette only as a being of the ordinary class, little formed to excite interest, could not resist being struck with the adieus of the governess, and felt a spark of esteem for the pupil kindled in his bosom. The journey to Paris was performed without a word being spoken by her. She quitted a very celebrated institution, a guide by whom she was tenderly loved, and many amiable young associates; and however desirous she might be to rejoin a mother she adored, and a family for whom she had the tenderest affection, she could not refuse a tribute of regret to interrupted friendship, an emotion of gratitude for kindnesses received. In alighting from the carriage she was supported by the arm of Saint Geran, when a delicate blush which overspread her countenance, a gentle tremor in her frame, and her downcast eyes, spoke the amiable modesty that reigned in her heart.

After being a short time arrived at Madame de Surville's, her melancholy wore away by degrees, when the most enchanting smile animated her irregular features, and illumined her eyes still swollen with tears. "'Tis in vain that we have brought you to Paris," said the Count, "your heart is still at Ecoen."—"Alas!" replied Annette, "is it possible instantly to forget the place where the soul has

been first expanded to the charms of friendship!"—"O heavens, what a voice!" said the Count within himself: "surely it is an angel that speaks!"—He now began to engage her in conversation; at every word which passed her lips he was filled with astonishment, with respect, and admiration. It was a purity of language combined with instruction, concealed beneath such unaffected modesty,—it was so perfect a knowledge of every thing good, such a complete ignorance of ill, and all uttered in that angelic tone of voice!—Oh! if Annette had dared to raise her eyes to him as she spoke, her conquest had been complete.

The three young rivals meanwhile, informed of Madame de Surville's return, were anxious to see her new *protégée*. They came then the very next day to pay her a visit. Eliza united with this anxiety a still greater to see Saint Geran, not doubting that she had altogether dazzled him by the riches of her imagination. But she saw him not, he on that day happened to omit visiting his relation: the evening therefore passed only in a minute examination of Mademoiselle de Saint Ange. The first sight excited no impressions in her favour. Her diminutive stature, her unstudied air, her small eyes yet red from the tears shed on the preceding day, the simplicity of her dress and manners, produced nothing but indifference in Adriana and Euphemia, but Eliza found them absolutely detestable.

Some days after, a second interview took

place. Saint Geran was then of the party. Eliza, anxious to display her superiority over Annette, treated her with that supercilious air which seemed to say, "Thou art a mighty insignificant being in comparison with me."—The humble Annette, who scarcely dared raise her eyes to her, seemed to acquiesce, and answer, "I know it, nor could dare to enter the lists with you."—Music was proposed; Adriana and Euphemia sung a modern duo, in which were combined all the difficulties of execution, all the ornaments and embroidery which are now by general consent considered as so deserving of admiration; while Eliza accompanied them with no less taste than confidence, and the performance when concluded was pronounced exquisite, delicious, divine. Eliza next performed a sonata, wherein were displayed at once all the riches of harmony, and all the powers of the instrument, which obeyed, as if with pleasure, the lightness of her fingers. Annette, astonished with execution so brilliant, would fain have excused herself from playing; but fearing lest her refusal might be ascribed to mortified self-love, overpowered besides by the solicitations of Madame de Surville, she accompanied herself in that charming air in the opera of *Œdipus at Colonna*, which begins "*I cannot quit you without shedding tears.*"

The analogy was so striking, that in singing these words she could not restrain an emotion which added inconceivably to the inexpressible sweetness of her voice. She avoided making

any flourishes, she did not change a single note in this enchanting piece ; but every modulation seemed so deeply felt by her, was expressed with so much truth, that all the spectators in this interesting moment could fancy they saw her taking leave of her young companions, nor could avoid joining their tears with those which stole down her own cheeks. “ How superior is this faithful picture of nature,” exclaimed Saint Geran in an ecstasy, “ to all those flourishes and ornaments with which our modern music is infested !—The pieces performed by those three young ladies were indeed splendid, and charmed the ear, but this alone touches the heart.”—Adriana and Euphemia, by a gentle inclination of the head, signified a sort of constrained admiration ; but Eliza, reddening, maintained a profound silence.

Madame de Surville, who knew that the Count was himself an excellent musician, entreated him in his turn to contribute towards the entertainment of the company. He readily complied, and proposed singing the grand air of Achilles in Gluck’s celebrated opera of Iphigenia in Aulis, asking Eliza to do him the favour of accompanying him. “ O dear,” she replied rather pertly, “ I really know nothing of that music.”—“ Yet I should have thought,” said Saint Geran, “ from the admirable manner in which you seconded the talents of the other young ladies,”—“ Oh ! that was a very different thing, I have so often played that air. But I cannot answer for being able to accompany at

sight, particularly Gluck's music. If you desire it, however, I will try."

The Count began. Eliza, very desirous of assisting his voice by her scientific play, made a thousand efforts to follow him, but all in vain; and after making numberless mistakes, was obliged at last to stop short, acknowledging that she could not proceed. "If Mademoiselle de Saint Ange would be so obliging," said Madame de Surville, "I am informed that she had this year the first prize for accompaniment."—"O indeed, madam," answered Annette, "I am very much afraid:—yet rather than that the ladies should be deprived of the pleasure of hearing Monsieur de Saint Geran, I will endeavour to surmount my fears."—She sat down then to the piano:—at first, as she had said, her hands trembled; but soon recovering herself, she went through the accompaniment with so much correctness and such a perfect knowledge of the art, that she at once surprised and enchanted all who heard her. Eliza herself could not withhold her applauses; while the Count, who was conscious that she had concealed with consummate skill some faults he had committed, was convinced that the modest Annette was in reality a very skilful musician, who in her studies had had the good sense to prefer real science to false brilliance.

In the different parties which succeeded to this first day of triumph, Annette never failed to bear away the palm for science and ex-

pression. It was in vain that the other ladies sought to eclipse her by the splendour of their execution : as soon as her voice was heard, rapture filled every heart ; when she accompanied, every tongue was eloquent in yielding her due applause.

A short time after, she equally evinced that music was not the only talent in which she excelled. She had often heard the young Count relate the particulars of his benefactor's death, the former Count de Saint Geran, and she had observed that he always wore suspended at his breast, by a chain of venerable white hair, a miniature of his adopted father. This induced her to form the project of representing on canvass the ever-memorable instant when this celebrated warrior expired on the field of honour, intending to present the picture as a tribute which she hoped would be acceptable to his relation Madame de Surville. She made the latter then the confidante of her project, requesting her to solicit the Count to intrust the miniature with her for some days, as she earnestly wished for permission to copy it. Madame de Surville readily acquiesced, and it was no sooner mentioned to the Count than he in the most obliging manner consigned the picture to her. Annette immediately commenced her labours, and in a short time presented her hostess with a faithful delineation of the scene. The victim of honour lay expiring on the breast of his son, on whom his dying eyes were fixed as he pronounced the last affecting words, " I

die content, since I leave a son worthy of me.” The two figures were such striking likenesses, and the scene was such an exact representation of what she had often heard described by the Count, while so much taste and feeling was displayed in the execution, that it was impossible not to be deeply affected, and to bear testimony by a tear to the superior talents of the artist.

The picture being framed in a manner suitable to its merits, Madame de Surville was anxious to witness the effect it would produce upon the young Count. One day when he came to see her, Annette being occupied in her own room preparing for her departure, Madame de Surville told him that she wished very much to ask his opinion of a painting, the subject of which had interested her very much; and she immediately produced the work of her young friend, without however naming her. The Count, equally surprised, transported and affected, changing colour, exclaimed with tears in his eyes, “Heavens! it is he!—it is myself! it is my father, my benefactor, that I behold!—I even seem to hear his voice!—all the money I am worth would scarcely pay the value of this charming picture!”

“The artist, however,” said Madame de Surville, “would never accept more from you than simple thanks.”—“How!—Who then can this artist be that paints nature so accurately, that seizes with such delicacy all its minutest shadings?”—“You see her,” said

Madame de Surville, pointing to Annette, who then entered the room. "How!" said the Count, overpowered with astonishment, "such rare talents accompanied by so much modesty! Can it be that this very superior performance"—"Spare me, I entreat, sir," said the timid Annette, "nor qualify with such an epithet this humble attempt, intended only as an acknowledgement of the kindness shown me by this friend of our family."—"It would be very dear to me undoubtedly," said Madame de Surville; "but, my sweet Annette, let me be permitted to offer it to the Count de Saint Geran, as the most precious gift that can be made by friendship."—"Never, no never," exclaimed the Count in rapture, "shall this charming work be any where but in my own apartment. It shall be my guide, my consolation, my dearest treasure; and every time that I cast my eyes upon the affecting scene, I shall say that nothing less than a rare union of all the most amiable qualities of the heart and mind could have represented thus faithfully, benevolence and gratitude."

Annette's only answer was a deep blush; and taking the picture from the hands of Madame de Surville, she placed it trembling in those of the Count, who said with indescribable emotion, "Yet permit me, madam, to entreat that you will add to this double present of friendship, what will constitute its brightest ornament."—"What do you mean, sir?"—"It is customary for an artist to embellish the pro-

ductions which he acknowledges with his name. How dear to me would be yours, traced by your own hand below this work !”

“ Arthur, you surprise me,” said Madame de Surville. “ You are neither the relation of Mademoiselle de Saint Ange, nor the friend of her family ; would it not then be in some sort transgressing against decorum, that her name should appear ?”—“ Nor is it that of Annette de Saint Ange that I dare presume to wish inscribed here.”—“ What name then ?” said Annette with a smile. “ Annette de Saint Geran,” said he, throwing himself at her feet. “ Yes,” he exclaimed with transport, “ she is found !—that ideal object on which my imagination has long dwelt, Heaven has now realised to complete my happiness. Lovely, modest Annette, but one word from your lips and I embrace with rapture the Countess de Saint Geran.”—“ Me, Count !—Rise, I entreat.—Surely you cannot”—“ Yes, adorable Annette, I ask you of Madame de Surville, who now represents your mother, and promise her faithfully, if my request be granted, to make you as happy as your extraordinary merits deserve.”—“ Excuse me, sir,—I feel much honoured, no doubt—but this language is so new to me—I scarcely have power to speak.”—“ Yet, lovely Annette”—“ Lovely ! Think, sir, that I am even plain”—“ With such a charming expression of countenance it is impossible to be so.”—“ That I am little”—“ Your mind is great.”—“ That I am poor”—“ But rich in

every virtue.”—“That I am the eldest of seven children, five of whom are sons under age.”—“I will be to them what Saint Geran was to me.”—“My mother is infirm.”—“The stronger reason for affording her every comfort that wealth can procure! I am impatient till I am authorised to offer her my tribute of filial cares and attentions.”—“You overwhelm me, sir!—so much goodness,—I really know not how to answer.”—“Every word I hear but confirms my resolution, but makes me more and more bless my choice. It is not alone your talents which have won my heart, it is the rare qualities of your mind,—and above all, that voice which is their faithful organ, and which seems descended from heaven to promise me consummate happiness on earth.”

These words were pronounced with so much ardour, so much frankness, so much expression, that Annette was dissolved in tears, and throwing herself upon the bosom of Madame de Surville, who was scarcely less moved, she said, “O my guide! my friend! to you I abandon myself,—speak, what shall I do?”—“Accept the hand of the most amiable man I know,” she replied. “I have had more than usual opportunities of studying the heart of the Count, and will answer for his worth.”

On the morrow then this excellent woman wrote to Madame de Saint Ange, and received a few days after her full consent to this happy marriage. It was celebrated at Annette’s particular request without pomp or ostentation,

nor did this extraordinary elevation change in any degree the former modesty and simplicity of her character. Her happiness was perfect, and the greater since it was extended to all her family.

The union met with universal approbation. Eliza herself, though she saw all her grand projects overthrown, could not help in secret applauding Saint Geran's choice; and when she learnt from Madame de Surville, that, without that fatiguing volubility which changed the natural sweetness of her voice, she might probably have been Countess of Saint Geran, she reflected seriously upon her errors, and moderated by degrees the warmth which had led her so much astray,—convinced that the greatest charm in a woman, her most powerful attraction, superior to talents, to grace, and even to beauty, is THE CHARM OF A SWEET VOICE.

THE FIRST STEP IN THE WORLD.

MONSIEUR DE MERINVAL had long exercised the profession of an advocate at Nismes, and acquired a high and general esteem. Devoted to this honourable career, he did not marry till late in life, and had attained his fiftieth year when he became a father. He had an only daughter named Agatha, who, being educated by a vain and imperious mother, early began to display a haughtiness of disposition which no time or reflection was ever able to subdue. Madame de Merinval thought that there never existed a person of equal merit and consideration with her husband; and the wealth which he acquired as the just price of his labours, only augmented every day the pride and superciliousness of her character. She constantly instilled into the mind of her dear Agatha the persuasion that she was a being of a superior kind to the other young ladies of the place, and was for ever instructing her that the daughter of a celebrated advocate, of one above all who was so rich as her father, was entitled to the homage of all around her, nor ought to render homage to any one.

The young Agatha, although naturally endowed with a sensibility of heart which often pierced through her ridiculous vanity, yet followed but too well the instructions of her im-

perious mother, and was soon remarkable throughout the town of Nismes for a haughtiness of demeanour which was carried sometimes even to impertinence. When she went into a room full of company, she always seized upon one of the principal places, and looked around her with an air of confidence and disdain, which seemed to say that they ought to think themselves much honoured by her presence. If she appeared at the theatre, or in the public walks, her stately carriage, her affected attitudes, and loud voice, all announced that she thought herself at least equal to those who were the most distinguished by their rank or talents. In one word, Madame de Merival found in Agatha the exact imitator of her own follies.

In a country town, where people are all rigidly classed according to their rank or fortune, no one can encroach with impunity upon the rights of those who are by general consent placed above them. Any endeavour to violate this custom is an imposition which the person who practises it will always be compelled sooner or later to repay with interest. Vain is the hope to make the scale in which each individual's pretensions are weighed incline in our favour at our own pleasure ; public opinion is always at its side to maintain a just balance.

Agatha had, then, numberless humiliations to encounter. She more than once received lessons which would have been sufficient to correct her, if she had not been continually

led astray by her mother. But she was instructed by the latter to regard the line of demarcation which the inhabitants of Nismes, though entertaining the highest esteem for her respectable father, always maintained between the daughter of an advocate and those of the principal magistrates, as the highest injustice.

Monsieur Merinval, constantly occupied with his own avocations, and trusting the education of Agatha too implicitly to his wife, was a long time before he perceived the ridiculous airs she was continually playing off,—indeed, was far from suspecting any thing of the kind in the usually artless age of fifteen. Instructed however by a friend, of a circumstance which he alone did not perceive, and judging as a man of sense that her defects would never be corrected by her mother, he resolved to try what was to be done by sending her awhile to one of the first schools at Paris, where the most perfect equality was maintained among all the pupils. Madame de Merinval could not without a severe pang separate herself from her adored daughter; but the idea that she would derive a vast accession of consequence from the polish received by having her education finished at Paris, and would thus acquire a positive right to be considered as superior to all the young women of Nismes, induced her to consent to the plan. She gave as a reason for this measure, to all who expressed astonishment at it, that a country education was insufficient for Mademoiselle de Merinval, that the

capital alone offered every thing requisite to render her worthy of the distinctions which the fortune and renown acquired by her father gave her a right to expect.

Monsieur de Merinval's views were very different from those of his wife. His only object was to correct that ridiculous pride, which is scarcely supportable even in those whose rank seems to offer some excuse for it. Arrived at her school, the new pupil had at first to experience some pretty severe rebuffs. Her lofty airs, her supercilious tone, drew the most mortifying remarks from the other young ladies ; no distinction was here shown but to superior diligence and attainments ; here were no obsequious assiduities, kindness was expected to be repaid with kindness ; no rank, no privileges were here enjoyed ; the daughter of the most humble artisan was upon a footing of perfect familiarity with the daughter of the first minister ; the opulent heiress was no more considered than the reduced orphan. In this state of entire equality the young people learned only lessons of humility ; they saw nothing but subjects of emulation ; they experienced nothing but the pure emotions of frank and disinterested friendship, and acquired that inappreciable habit of desiring to be distinguished only by what they were intrinsically worth, not by the stations they were to occupy in the world.

Some time elapsed before Agatha could in any way reconcile herself to a state of existence so new to her. It is not easy to pass

tranquilly at once from a high opinion of one's own importance, to the conviction that one is a very insignificant being ; from the pleasure of being always flattered, to the chagrin of being frequently reprov'd ; from a habit of always commanding, to the necessity of constantly submitting. However, as she had sense enough soon to see that resistance was useless, and would only occasion her new mortifications, she pretended to accustom herself by degrees to the established rules of the house, and even to distinguish herself in a short time by the scrupulous exactness with which she performed whatever was required of her, and by the anxious solicitude she showed to engage the affections of her numerous associates.

But since, at the age of fifteen, any defects of character are become deep rooted evils, which it is scarcely possible wholly to pluck up ; so Agatha, under the exterior of the most engaging familiarity, always preserved in secret the same character which had been implanted in her infancy, nor could refrain from showing it in a certain degree, even in seeking to make the reverse the most apparent. As talents alone could here obtain distinction, she courted the friendship only of those who were of decidedly superior talents ; and, determined never to be upon a level with the common herd, sought to merit their friendship by emulating their attainments. This rivalry was the means of developing the happy dispositions she had received from nature, and conducted her soon

to so high a degree of perfection, that she merited the warmest eulogiums from the very respectable woman to whose care she was intrusted. Every thing that related to the usual course of instruction was soon familiar to her, and the numerous accomplishments she besides acquired, seemed but the simple clothing of the more profound knowledge with which her mind was stored. Agatha was the universal topic of conversation among all the houses at Paris which had any connection with the school where she was ; she obtained numerous prizes at the annual distributions, and her natural pride, over which she had only thrown a veil, found nourishment on which she could not be condemned for feasting with delight.

Madame de Merinval, who received at Nismes repeated congratulations upon the brilliant figure made by her daughter, experienced a degree of delight not to be exceeded even by her vanity. She soon entreated her husband to consent to Agatha's returning home, that she might adorn with her merits and her charms the place of her birth, and form an advantageous establishment there. Monsieur de Merinval, who to the most amiable urbanity of character united the warmest paternal affection, hastened therefore to Paris, to assure himself from his own observations, whether the flattering reports he had heard were well founded or not, and whether that insupportable pride in his daughter from which he had suffered so much was really subdued.

Agatha, impatient to return to her mother, from whom she had constantly received such letters of adulation as compensated all the sacrifices she had been obliged to make, now redoubled her kindness and sociability towards her companions, and deference to her governess. In both she dissembled so well her real feelings, that every one was eager to greet Monsieur Merinval with the most flattering eulogiums of his daughter. The happy father then yielding to the very natural wishes of the latter, as well as to his own inclinations, consented to her leaving the school, trusting that the reasons which occasioned her being placed there no longer existed. Agatha took leave of her companions with every appearance of the most lively emotions, nay, even affected not to be able to separate herself from her excellent instructress without deep regret; while the latter, in placing her in the hands of her father, warmly expressed how much she thought her school would lose in being deprived of her. Monsieur de Merinval remained a few days in Paris, in order to show her the numerous objects of curiosity which that capital presents to a lover of the arts, and then set off post for Nismes, where he soon placed in her mother's arms the treasure she so ardently desired.

A few days after, a grand entertainment was to be given at the town-hall, at which were to be present all the most distinguished persons at Nismes, whether of the magistracy, of the army, or private gentlemen, with all

the beauty and fashion among the females of the place. Monsieur de Merinval, as a member of the municipal body, was appointed one of the stewards upon this occasion.

As fame had spoken so highly of Agatha during her absence, every one was now upon her return impatient to see her, and assure themselves with their own eyes, whether she deserved the eulogiums bestowed upon her. Madame de Merinval, whose head was fairly turned by her maternal vanity, would fain have dressed her with all the splendour to which she thought her beauty and her wealth equally entitled her. But this idea met with a decided opposition from Monsieur Merinval. He insisted that Agatha should appear in a style of dress suited to her age, which was only now seventeen, more remarkable for its elegant simplicity than for any thing rich and showy; that her principal ornaments should be found in the affability, the courtesy, and the modesty of her behaviour. Addressing himself afterwards in private to her, calling her the charm and comfort of his old age, he said with the most affecting tone and manner: "Two years are now passed, my child, since you quitted this town where you first saw the light. At that time an insufferable pride, a presumptuous vanity, which made you believe yourself something very much above what you really are, above what I am, drew upon you the ridicule and aversion of all those with whom you associated. Long blinded by my love for you, I

thought not of combating at its first appearance this dangerous quality, which would for ever have destroyed both your own happiness and mine. Thus suffered to take too deep a root, it became necessary at length, in order to accomplish my purpose, to separate myself awhile from what was most dear to me, and confide the finishing of your education to the hands of strangers. Heaven has repaid me for this great sacrifice, and I see you return to your native town under auspices the most flattering. To-morrow you will appear before the eyes of the public, by whom your appearance is expected with eagerness, prepared as they are to behold you with admiration. Yes, my dear Agatha, to-morrow is the important moment when you make your *first step in the world*. Ah! if my cares, my tenderness, merit some return on your part, if you are as emulous as I am of obtaining general esteem and regard, be careful above all things of your behaviour on the occasion. Appear at this approaching festivity with that amiable urbanity which is the inseparable companion of true merit; expiate, if it be possible, towards the world the errors of your infancy; and let my ears be delighted with hearing, as a general remark, that in proportion as your behaviour was formerly vain and ridiculous, it is now modest and engaging."

Agatha appeared greatly affected with what she heard, and, pretending to be fully sensible of the importance both of the remarks and of the

advice, faithfully promised her father to regulate her behaviour entirely according to his wishes, to show herself worthy of being his daughter. She threw aside, though not without much secret regret, the rich dress her mother had provided, and resigned herself to appearing in one which under the mask of an affected simplicity really displayed the most studied elegance.

The hour of meeting at the festivity being arrived, Agatha followed her father and mother into the town-hall, where a numerous company was already assembled. As soon as she entered, she was surrounded by a crowd of gazers eager to examine and pass their judgement upon her. Faithful to her engagement, she appeared with downcast eyes, spoke with diffidence, blushed at any compliment addressed to her, and, to the astonishment of every one, proceeded with her father to a part of the room occupied only by the young ladies who might be considered as without rank or place. Such a contrast to her former manners excited general astonishment, and this increased at every moment as she affected more and more to humble herself, till at length a general murmur of admiration ran through the whole company. Monsieur de Merinval's delight knew no bounds; the compliments paid him upon his daughter's account filled his eyes with tears; he came up to her, took one of her hands which he pressed to his heart, and seemed by his looks to repeat to her again that she was the charm and comfort of his old age.

After a brilliant concert, a magnificent ball commenced, which was opened by the four principal ladies of the place. Madame de Merival by a contemptuous smile evinced her indignation that her daughter was not of the number ; but Agatha was soon invited to succeed them. The grace and elegance of her dancing were the universal subject of admiration, and it was observed that they received added charms from the candour and modesty of her demeanour. All the young men, among whom were several officers of distinction, were emulous of the honour of dancing with her. She engaged herself first to those among the competitors whose appearance announced a superior rank or education, rejecting with no small address those who she presumed did not enjoy like advantages. Among the latter was a young cavalier, whose modest unassuming exterior concealed from Agatha the rank which he really held in the town. Not wholly dismayed by a first refusal, he watched his opportunity to make a second attempt, in which he was not more successful. Agatha, whose head began again to be turned by the homage she received, could no longer support her assumed character, but gave herself up wholly to her natural disposition, and began to play off her former airs and graces. The young cavalier however, still not entirely daunted, ventures upon a third attempt, and proposes to her to give him her hand in a waltz which was about to begin ; but again his invitation was answered

by a refusal, accompanied with a look and movement of pettish anger. The young man repeated his request.—“No, sir, you must excuse me.”—“Mademoiselle ought not to be surprised at the solicitude of any one to be honoured with her hand.”—“I have really so many engagements, that I hardly know whose turn it is.”—“Yet it should appear, madam, as if you had no engagement for this waltz.”—“Very true; but I really am glad to rest awhile.”—“Then I can say no more.” At these words he made a respectful bow, which she scarcely deigned to return, and retired surprised and confounded at the abrupt answers and disdainful looks of her whose praises he had heard resounded from almost every tongue.

At length the waltz began. The young man abandoned to his reflections, and exceedingly piqued, not so much at the refusal he had experienced as at the contemptuous manner in which it was given, determined within himself that nothing should ever induce him again to offer himself as the partner of Mademoiselle de Merinval, however attractive she might be. But how was his astonishment increased, when a few moments after he saw her led up by a lieutenant of the navy to join the waltz! He presses forward immediately, and, addressing Agatha, says with a tone which was no longer that of compliment and diffidence, “Mademoiselle, you cannot dance.”—“How?” answered the lieutenant hastily.—“I have the

honour of observing to Mademoiselle that she acknowledged to me she had no engagement for this waltz. Her refusal in that case becomes an insult, and she shall not dance.”—“ You assume a very haughty tone, sir,” said the lieutenant.—“ ’Tis that of a man of honour, who will not endure an insult.”—“ You are certainly welcome to say what you please, but Mademoiselle shall dance if she pleases.”—“ Only if she pleases to dance with me.”—“ She shall dance with me, I say, or I will make you dance yourself.”—“ I never refuse such an invitation, and engage you to fulfil it after the waltz.”—“ What an impertinent puppy !” said the navy officer in a low tone of voice, and stepping up to Agatha, who pale, trembling, and sensible too late of the whole extent of her fault, entreated him instantly to hand her back to her seat. In vain he solicited her to continue the waltz, desirous of braving his adversary : terrified she quits him hastily, and runs every where to seek her father, and communicate to him what had passed, that he might if possible prevent the consequences.

She had scarcely quitted the lieutenant, when the latter on a sign made him by the young man accompanied him out of the room. Agatha, with tottering steps and a heart overwhelmed with anguish, was some time before she could find Monsieur de Merinval ; he was indeed at that moment absent from the room, giving some orders as one of the stewards. Meeting him at length, she seized him by the

arm. "O come, my father!" she exclaimed with accents of distraction, "come and prevent a dreadful calamity!" So saying, she led him out of the room by the door at which she had seen the two antagonists retire, relating to him by the way the cruel apprehensions with which her mind was impressed.

Monsieur de Merinval, sharing deeply in her fears and anguish, asks of the different guards about the hall, whether they had not seen two young men go out appearing to be engaged in a dispute; but no tidings of them were to be obtained. After running for some time hither and thither, he at length hears the clashing of swords; he calls to some of the guards, who advance with torches, when they find the young man stretched upon the ground bathed in his blood. He had at first wounded his adversary, but not materially, and afterwards fell himself, the victim of Agatha's pride and his own insulted honour. But what was the anguish of Monsieur de Merinval, when, on approaching the wounded cavalier, he discovered him to be the son of Monsieur d'Audicourt, one of the principal magistrates of the town—his only son, the hope and delight of a most ancient and respectable family! "O my daughter!" he exclaimed, "how grievous is thy fault, and what anguish will thy *first step in the world* cost thy wretched father!"

Agatha, overpowered by reproaches which she felt to be so fatally just, and tortured to her

soul by the sad spectacle before her eyes, utters in her turn a dreadful cry, and falls senseless into the arms of her father. He employed his little remaining strength to support her to the first carriage he could find, and carried her home, scarcely knowing what he was doing or whither he was going. The sad tidings soon spread through the ball, that the son of Monsieur d'Audicourt had been mortally wounded in a duel occasioned by the pride and folly of Mademoiselle de Merinval. The dancing was instantly suspended ; nothing but murmurs and lamentations succeeded in a moment to the sounds of joy and hilarity. The venerable Monsieur d'Audicourt and his family, supported by their friends, quit the room, overwhelmed with anguish, and hasten to seek their wounded son, who was pronounced to be in the most imminent danger.

Madame de Merinval's situation was now truly painful and humiliating, surrounded on all sides by the just reproaches of a numerous and respectable company. It was now that her insolent and overweening pride received the punishment it so justly merited. To her every one pointed as the first cause of this dreadful calamity. "It is she," said one, "who by her ridiculous vanity has corrupted the naturally good dispositions of her child."—"It is she," said another, "who seeking to set her up unreasonably, has only drawn upon her excess of humiliation, has destroyed her

happiness for ever, and deprived her of any share in the esteem which we all feel for her respectable father.”—“She must answer with her head,” said a third, still more incensed, “for the life of the young Audicourt. Woe to her, if this young man, to whom we looked as the pride and honour of his country, is lost to us for ever!”—“Is it possible that she can still remain here!” cried a thousand voices at once: “shame ought surely instantly to have driven her hence!”

Even the proud and imperious spirit of Madame de Merinval could not stand reproaches like these, the justice of which it was impossible not to feel, and she retired hastily, amid the groans and indignation of the whole room.

The wounded young man passed a terrible night, nor did he appear more tranquil the following day; in a word, he was dying for three days. Monsieur d’Audicourt’s hotel was constantly surrounded by the people of Nismes; men, women, old men, children, all invoking Heaven to spare the beloved son of this respectable magistrate; all swearing to avenge his death, if he should sink at last under the dangers with which he was menaced.

Monsieur de Merinval was not satisfied with sending every hour to inquire after the unfortunate victim: he assumed courage during the night to repair himself to Monsieur d’Audicourt’s; and addressing him with all the frankness and ardour of genuine and profound grief, he sought not to excuse Agatha, but merely

to convince the worthy magistrate of the severity of his own sufferings. "They are sufficiently painted on your countenance," said Monsieur d'Audicourt; "but endeavour to conceal them from me, they only add to my distress, and my own feelings are as much as I can support at this moment."—Monsieur de Merinval, pierced to the soul by so affecting a reply, asked as a particular favour that he might see the young man, "that I may," said he, "wash away, with my tears, the blood which my unhappy daughter has caused to flow."—He could not survive the stroke, he added, if he should be refused this only consolation.

Monsieur d'Audicourt then conducted him himself to the bed where lay his son in a burning fever and delirium. At this moment he never ceased repeating, sometimes with a feeble and languid voice, at others with a violent and exasperated tone, "Fatal beauty!—I die then thy victim!—O my father!—O my family!—and you my good fellow citizens, yet, yet pardon her!" Then in a few moments he proceeded in the most pathetic tone: "She is so lovely!—the impression she made on me, even at the first glance, was so profound—fatal, fatal beauty!—O if her soul!—how I could have loved her as a wife!—but I die for her!—fatal pride!—lovely, unhappy Agatha!—pardon her, pardon her, my father!"

Every word he uttered sunk to the very soul of the unfortunate Merinval, more unfortunate

even than the parents who were thus cruelly deprived of their only hope and treasure. Kissing a hundred times the icy hands of the expiring youth, and bathing them with his tears, he repeated in a voice broken with sobs, "Fatal pride!—wretched Agatha!—O ye, his father, his family, pardon, pardon her!" Overcome by this scene, Monsieur Merinval was unable to reach his home without assistance, but returned supported by the servants of Monsieur d'Audicourt, and instantly repeated to his daughter every word that had fallen from the lips of her expiring victim.

How is it possible to describe the effect they produced upon this unfortunate young creature! "How," said she in a tone scarcely less distracted than that of the wounded youth, "was I thus distinguished by the most amiable, the most generous of mankind?—might I have fixed his choice, perhaps have become his wife, and have I been his murderer?—O wretched pride!—O miserable Agatha!—I ought to have been transported with the noble mind he evinced, and I was insensible to it.—Ah! I have destroyed my own happiness for ever."

The situation of young Audicourt, meantime, became every hour more and more alarming; and in spite of the best assistance that medical skill could offer, or the tenderest cares that affection could bestow, after three days of severe suffering his family were deprived by the remorseless hand of death of their dearest, their only treasure. The grief of his pa-

rents is not to be described ; the whole town indeed was in such a state of consternation, that it seemed as if some great public calamity had just occurred. But what were the feelings of Agatha when she learnt that young Audicourt had breathed his last ? In vain would her father, if such had been his wishes, have endeavoured to conceal it from her ; the murmurs and imprecations uttered by the inhabitants of the town, as they passed the door of the house, would have sufficiently informed her of the fatal event. “ It is over then ! ” said she wildly, “ he is no more, and ’tis I who am his murderer !—O with what horror must my name inspire his parents, his family, nay, every soul by whom it is heard !—Already I hear the cries of vengeance uttered by his indignant townsmen, they pierce my ears, they rend my soul !—Ah, my father, let us fly !—let us banish ourselves for ever from this place which gave birth to such a wretch !—I can never encounter the indignation I must meet every time I appear !—O that I could fly equally from my own thoughts ! ”

Monsieur Merinval was not insensible to the justice of his daughter’s apprehensions ; the popular indignation was such that it was scarcely safe for her to remain subjected to it ; it was even carried to such a height, as to be levelled not only against his wife and daughter but against himself. Taking advantage, therefore, of a door in the garden belonging to his house which opened upon the ramparts of the

town, he departed at night with his wife and the unfortunate Agatha; and getting into a carriage which was appointed to meet them just without the gates, they fled to a country house which he had at the distance of some leagues. Agatha proceeded towards the carriage with tottering steps, supported by her father; when in the midst of the walk, with what added horror was her soul impressed by hearing the funeral bells over the whole town proclaim her guilt and the general loss! This mournful and heart-rending sound nearly destroyed the little strength she had remaining, and it was not without the most painful efforts that she could proceed to the appointed spot.

Madame de Merival, hitherto insensible to her own misguided conduct, was now obliged to acknowledge, when too late, into what a precipice her pride and folly had plunged her unhappy daughter. She saw herself constrained to abandon for ever the ambitious projects she had formed for her establishment in life, to renounce all her lofty expectations. Monsieur de Merival, unable to bear the idea of ever appearing again before the president D'Audicourt at the bar at Nismes, lost that distinction with which he had been honoured in the town, and with it the source whence his fortune was derived; while Agatha, buried in her retreat, remained without any other prospect than of passing there the remainder of her sorrowful days. Resting her whole hopes of consolation, in a situation so forlorn, upon soothing and

tranquillizing the declining years of her parents, she never omitted relating her story to any young women whom chance from that time threw in her way, urging them to take warning by her example, and bear constantly in their minds this important truth, that the future happiness or misery of our lives often depends entirely upon THE FIRST STEP WE MAKE IN THE WORLD.

THE TABLETS OF FLORIAN.

MONSIEUR NAZE, one of the most celebrated booksellers in Paris, whose opulence was equalled by his integrity, was the father of a numerous family. In proportion as they grew up, his attention to his business redoubled; and, as it always happens in a house where industry and activity preclude the entrance of vice, all the children of this worthy man turned out well, and surrounded him with happiness superior to any other which can be experienced upon earth.

But it was not by his children alone that he was tenderly beloved; he was equally regarded by all literary persons with particular affection and esteem. He did not seek, like most of his brethren, to enrich himself by the labour and talents of those who brought their works to him; his greatest pleasure was to see them obtain a fair recompense for their toils; and when the success of their productions was beyond his expectations, he never failed to make them a proper acknowledgement. He, in short, considered himself as the agent of literary men, not as their plunderer and tyrant.

Monsieur Naze had had the happiness of establishing eight of his children in the world, who formed around him the interesting spectacle of eight worthy families. One only now

remained with him, his youngest daughter, by name Camilla. She was seventeen years old, of an amiable character, and endowed with all the good qualities that a careful education can bestow. But, accustomed from her infancy to hear scarcely any conversation at her father's house, except on subjects of science and literature, she became enchanted by the eulogiums that were every day made in her presence on *Sappho*, on Mesdames *Deshoulières*, *Dacier*, and *Duboccage*. Thus by degrees she was inspired with an ardent wish to imitate the modern females who were following the track of these illustrious favourites of Apollo, and devoted herself to poetry: every moment that she could spare from the labours of the shop, and the cares of the family, was dedicated to it. Besides the literary meetings which were frequently held at her father's house, the opportunities afforded her by his business of procuring the best models in this way increased her poetical mania. For some time she kept her passion a secret; but at last, from the blindness of self-love, she could no longer keep it concealed. She began by consulting, as if on the part of a modest anonymous author, some very intelligent men, on a few light pieces of poetry, which she said had been confided to her with a request that they might be submitted to their judgement. These first essays presenting nothing remarkable, and being even deficient in the rules of versification, only excited the laughter of those to whom they were shown;

but although mortified to the quick, she was not discouraged by such a check. She now made it her business to study the rules of versification, and soon acquired a competent knowledge of the construction of the different kinds of verse most commonly used in modern poetry. Nothing is impossible to an imagination led away by any prevailing taste, and goaded on by offended self-love. Our young Sappho armed with her rules applied again to her profession, and presented some fresh productions to the formidable committee; but always in the name of the timid anonymous author. She had this time the satisfaction of hearing it remarked, that there was no defect in the versification,—but as a balance it was observed, that this was all which could be said; for though not incorrect, the poetry was weak, inharmonious, and devoid of imagination. It was indeed, decided that the anonymous writer was not intended by nature for a votary of the Muses, and that a celebrated observation from a great poet, whose sentence was incontrovertible, might in this case be fairly applied, “*That to him Phœbus was deaf, and Pegasus restive.*”

Camilla was not yet intimidated; and wishing at whatever price it might cost her to pass for a wit, she resolved to adopt the means made use of by some would-be poets, who do not scruple to appropriate the talents of others to their own purposes. Our young muse was now occupied night and day in turning over

every collection of antient poetry she could meet with ; she studied all the old chronicles that were to be found in the well stored shop of her father ; and when she discovered an uncommon or brilliant idea, she fashioned it after her own manner, or rather disfigured it by dressing it in a modern style ; after which her composition was laid before her inflexible judges, but still in the name of the unknown author.

Struck with the originality of ideas, and the forcible expressions in the works now submitted to their decision, the judges immediately recalled their former sentence, and unanimously owned that the unknown author's last productions announced true poetical talents, an inspiration emanating from Phœbus himself. The good Monsieur Naze observed in vain, that these ideas did not appear new to him, that he was almost certain he had seen them before ; the literary court of judicature attached no importance to any thing except what had struck them ; and, presuming that it was not easy to put old poetry into modern language, determined the modest author to be a legitimate son of Apollo, and charged Camilla to transmit to him their warmest congratulations. This gave her such excessive delight that she could retain her secret no longer, but finished by betraying herself. All the members of the committee immediately surrounded her, praising her modesty, her perseverance, and spoke of her afterwards with ad-

miration at their different societies. In a short time, nothing was talkèd of but the poetical talents of Camilla Naze; and notwithstanding that her reputation was usurped, she saw herself extolled to the skies in the public journals, and cited as a tenth muse.

But, though dazzled by so flattering a triumph, she could not reflect upon it without owning to herself that it was one of which she was unworthy. It is possible to fascinate a credulous and indulgent tribunal, but it is not possible to escape from one's own conscience. "Yet," she would say to herself, "the greatest geniuses have borrowed original ideas from their predecessors. *Corneille* took the *Cid* from *William de Castro*; *Moliere* his *Amphitryon* from *Plautus*; and it is positively asserted that Madame *Deshoulières* is not altogether the author of the charming Idyll addressed to her Sheep. With such examples before me, I may safely banish these scruples."

Monsieur Naze had a delightful house in the village of Sécéaux, where he assembled all his children and many of his friends every Sunday. It was close to the extensive park belonging to the then Duke of Penthievre, a man well known for his benevolence and the simplicity of his manner of living. The Chevalier de Florian, secretary to this prince, was very much attached to the estimable Monsieur Naze; and had made him the editor of a part of those works which have classed him amongst the most fertile and the most amiable

of the French literati. He would often go in a morning to talk with his bookseller, whose merits he knew how to appreciate better than any body, and from whom he had more than once received advice which he found of great utility.

Camilla, perceiving in Florian the same talents which she was herself so desirous of cultivating, experienced an inexpressible pleasure in consulting him upon her productions. He, who united to the engaging suavity diffused throughout his works, a playful satire in his conversation, endeavoured to divert her from the mania by which she was possessed to pass for a wit. He pointed out to her all the torments of a female author; the sarcasms, the calumnies, the contempt, the isolated life, to which she is almost always condemned; and then made her remark her elder sisters, so happy themselves in forming the happiness of their husbands and families; recommending to her to imitate them, to prefer the God Hymen to the Muses, and choose for her Apollo a good helpmate.

Camilla was far from yielding to this prudent advice. Her enthusiasm and self-love led her even to believe that her monitor was jealous of the fame she was daily acquiring, and feared one day to see her in a higher station than himself upon Parnassus. She pursued her favourite studies, therefore, with more zeal than before, and took every opportunity of attracting the public notice as a celebrated woman.

A favourable circumstance for her soon occurred. The birthday of her respectable father was approaching; and it was a custom amongst his circle, that on that day some little dramatic piece, suited to the occasion, should be performed as a tribute of friendship from the literary characters who most frequented his society. On this occasion Camilla announced that she would furnish the entertainment; and she immediately set about composing a pastoral, the characters of which were to be performed by the grandchildren of Monsieur Naze; among these there was one of eight, and another of ten years old, who appeared to be particularly intelligent.

But since this kind of poetry is not in general appreciated as highly as it deserves, genuine talents and an enlarged mind are required to succeed in it, and above all a naïveté which young poets commonly disdain, as they are emulous of raising themselves to the heavens on their first flight. Camilla therefore found it very difficult to compose her pastoral, and would never have finished it but for the resources she possessed in the library which she had collected. Furnished with such ample materials, she had only to make her choice among them, to connect them together, and to adapt them to the occasion; and she often retired to meditate on her arduous undertaking in the beautiful country which surrounds the village of Scéaux. About a week before the important day, she was walking with some of

the family in a fine wood a mile and a half from their house, when, loitering behind the rest, her thoughts were wholly occupied by her pastoral. Her companions seeing her thus absorbed did not dare to interrupt her, and, walking on, left her at full liberty to indulge in her poetical reveries. In the compilation she had made she had endeavoured to write a song full of naïveté for the eldest of her little nieces, who was as beautiful as an angel, and was to play the principal character. This was the only part wanting to complete the work ; and so much delicacy of sentiment and expression was required in it, that she revolved it over and over again in her mind, and tormented herself in vain : she was unable to accomplish the task, and was almost in despair. Nothing she found was more difficult than to express simple nature with fidelity.

In crossing a walk remote from that where her family waited for her, she perceived some tablets partly open, lying at the foot of a plane-tree. She took them up, and casting her eyes upon the first leaf, to see whose they might be, she did not find any name, or any thing that could indicate the owner. She ran over several pages, and found first a variety of detached passages, such as the following :

“ Happy the soul of sensibility, to whom the aspect of smiling fields, and the murmur of the pebbly stream, afford a pleasure no less affecting than that which arises from the performance of a good action.”

“To have nothing but for one’s self, is to have nothing at all.”

“What can he do who is poor, yet has a heart of sensibility?—Resolve not to love.—Ah! that is a greater ill than poverty itself!”

“Sweet melancholy!—the tears occasioned by thee, are to tender hearts like the gentle dew to the blooming rose.”

At length, among a great number of similar thoughts, she came to three stanzas of poetry in the same style. She read them several times over,—the ideas on which they were founded, seemed to her so simple and full of naïveté, that she thought they could never be sufficiently admired. They seemed to be written in the character of a young shepherdess, and thus did she pour out the artless effusions of her innocent mind.

To tend my flocks is all my care, my pride,
On my dear lambs alone my bliss I rest;
I lead them to the limpid fountain’s side,
And in their joy myself feel truly blest.

I see the dawn appear, the evening close,
Yet still no anxious fears or wishes prove;
O how I prize this sweet, this calm repose!
Nor wish to know that hapless infant, Love.

Be Love and wolves still far from my retreat,
From wolves my dog protects my lambkins mild;
Nought but my crook have I, if Love I meet,
For my defence,—Well, Love is but a child.

“How charming! what exquisite simplicity!” exclaimed Camilla, repeating the two last lines of the third stanza, “Yes! it is thus that

nature expresses herself, and that innocence speaks. Oh! if I dared but to make use of these stanzas in my pastoral, what honour they would do me! . . . Yet why not? The tablets do not indicate to whom they belong; the hand which has written the verses is wholly unknown to me; perhaps they may have been taken from one of those old collections that are become public property; I have found a diamond, and I will adorn myself with it."— Then concealing the tablets, she rejoined her family who were waiting for her, and announced that she had finished her pastoral; that nothing now was wanting but an air for the new song she had been writing.

The next morning, the performers began to rehearse this *chef d'œuvre* of the muse of Scéaux. A beautiful theatre was constructed in the grove, which was to be illuminated with coloured lamps. The birth-day arrived, and a very numerous company assembled at the appointed hour, amongst whom were many of the literati of the time. An overture composed by Dezéde, inimitable in the light airy simplicity of his style, was executed by the most celebrated performers from Paris. The grand-children of the happy Naze had rehearsed their characters so often with Camilla, that they did ample justice to the pastoral, and produced an astonishing effect. Every body was surprised, and, after applauding with ecstasy the amiable little actors, looked with admiration at Camilla, who had never expe-

rienced so happy a moment in her life.—“What a pure and flowing style!” exclaimed one of the literati in the midst of the audience. “What easy well-turned lines!” added another. “And what appropriate and impressive ideas!” said a third, “Bravo! bravissimo!” At length came the song found in the tablets. The little girl, on whom her aunt had inculcated that this was the climax of the whole, sung the first stanza with wonderful expression; but in the second the excess of her zeal put her entirely out. She began the first line

I see the dawn appear, . . .

when she hesitated, and after repeating the same words several times, “I see the dawn appear,” she was just about making a full stop. Florian, however, impatient, no doubt, that the *dawn did not appear*, and being near the stage, repressing his inclination to laugh, very good-humouredly whispered to the pretty shepherdess the remainder of the line “the evening close,” after which she went on very successfully.

Every body supposed that the whisperer had been consulted by Camilla, and recollected this stanza; but she, having now no doubt that the song was Florian’s, and that he was the owner of the tablets, felt a confusion that she had scarcely power to conceal. The more she was applauded and congratulated, the more severe was her punishment, the more deeply she felt the truth of what Florian had so often told her; while he, no less generous than delicate, would

not add to what she suffered by revealing the plagiarism which had been committed. He even endeavoured to calm her agitation, by saying before all the company when the representation was over, that though he had indeed some little hand in the song which had been sung, it was the only part of the performance that he had any knowledge of; the honour of it was due entirely to its charming author.

The applauses bestowed on Camilla were now more warm than ever; and she, still more confused by the address and kindness of Florian, blushed and betrayed an emotion which every body mistook for modesty, and honoured it by still further applause.

Florian, nevertheless, desirous of ascertaining whether the lesson he had given would produce all the effect he expected, mixing in the general conversation, casually mentioned that some little time ago, as he was upon a walk, he lost his tablets, which he very much regretted, since they contained several fragments for his pastoral of Galatea, on which he had been occupied for some months. "These fragments," he added, "can be of no use whatever to the person who may have found them, and I will engage to give a handsome reward to any one who will bring them to me:" in saying this he gave a significant glance at Camilla. She understanding it perfectly, resolved to restore him his tablets; and with this view retiring to her apartment, she could not resist reading again, and with a new interest mixed with the

most lively gratitude, the fragments that it contained, so full of amiable morality, and which actually make a part of the charming pastoral of Galatea. When she came to that line of the song where her little songstress had stopped, and which Florian had so naturally whispered to her, she could not restrain an emotion of vexation; but recollecting how kindly he had spared her self-love, and averted from her the disgrace she deserved, she resumed her resolution, and the next morning sent him his tablets with the following note written on the first leaf:

“I return your treasure which I had the foolish vanity to think of appropriating to myself. The success I have obtained is owing to you, it is the last usurpation of which I will ever be guilty. The lesson you have given me will always be present to my mind, and warmly acknowledged in my heart. I renounce for ever my poetical mania. Must I be also for ever estranged from your friendship and esteem?

“CAMILLA NAZE.”

Florian could not read this apology from a young romantic head, which he had brought back to reason, without a lively emotion; and his success convinced him that it is not by wounding self-love, but by managing it with address that it must be brought to a sense of its errors. As he wished to congratulate Camilla on her resolution, and to do away the fears she testified with respect to him, he sent back her messenger with the following answer:

“I am much indebted to you, madam, for the very great pleasure I experience in saving from further ridicule, one who can boast the possession of every virtue embellished by beauty. Judge after such an acknowledgement whether you have any reason to fear losing my friendship and esteem!—Never forget that the Muses are old coquets, who always prefer the men, and are jealous of women, nor ever appear to show them any favour but to torment them. For this reason they are often at variance with the Graces, who prefer the truth, naked as she may be, and often repeat to them the following adage, which I send to you as the recompense I promised to whoever might restore me my tablets.

“A woman who is good and amiable without extraordinary talents is a much more valuable character than a female wit.

“THE CHEVALIER DE FLORIAN.”





The Union of the three Arts.

THE UNION OF THE THREE ARTS, PAINTING, MUSIC, AND DANCING.

TO acquire a superficial knowledge of many things, without attaining perfection in any, is the mania of the day, the system of modern education. Society is thus overrun with shallow minds, who talk on all subjects without having reflected on any : parrots, as they may be called, of the drawing-room, who go to retail in one place what they have heard in another. In this manner will the majority of those who might be the ornaments of society, sacrifice the lasting enjoyments of well cultivated minds, and the most rational and durable happiness of life, to the vain pleasure of shining for a few hours in circles composed only of the trifling and the flippant.

The three daughters of Count Harcourt discovered from their infancy very different tastes and characters. The eldest, whose name was Amanda, applied herself to painting ; the second, named Cecilia, cultivated music ; but Charlotte, the youngest, wishing to possess a variety of accomplishments, did not perfect herself in any one.—“ What nonsense,” she would say to her sisters, “ with our rank, and our fortune, not to familiarise ourselves with all the arts !—Amanda is ignorant of every thing but her pictures ; Cecilia is only happy at her

piano ; I, who mean to enlarge the circle of my ideas, and take advantage of the happy dispositions that I have received from nature, cultivate at once dancing, music, painting and languages.”

“ It is very well,” replied Amanda, “ but as each of the fine arts requires all one’s time and faculties, it necessarily follows that you can make no progress in them ; and, with the exception of dancing, which you are certainly mistress of in a very high degree, you must own, my good Charlotte, that your knowledge is not very great.”

“ I should die upon the spot,” replied the latter with vivacity, “ if I were obliged, like you two, to pass whole days upon my seat, with my mind fixed on the same object. I must have motion, agitation, variety ; for which reason I maintain that nothing is to be compared to dancing. How delightful to skim over the floor of an immense ball-room, like a zephyr upon the surface of the water ! What rapture, to hear it said, as one passes the different groupes of company, “ How graceful, how airy ! what elegance in her motion ! she might be taken for Flora traversing the globe to announce the return of spring.”

“ Such a triumph is, undoubtedly, very gratifying,” said Cecilia in her turn, who had just finished playing a very long and difficult sonata, “ but every thing has its enjoyments. Can there be any thing more flattering, than when one sits down to the piano, in a large circle,

to hear it whispered from one to the other, It is Cecilia Harcourt, she plays divinely.—I seat myself, looking round with a timid air, to make people believe I am afraid, and claim their indulgence. I begin, and immediately there is a dead silence, no creature moves even a finger, the auditors scarcely draw their breath. After a striking prelude that one gives oneself the air of playing by heart, follows a sonata by *Dussek*, the Storm by *Steibelt*, or some of the admirable compositions of Mozart. Nobody can tell which to prefer. What expression ! what a brilliant finger ! is repeated on all sides. The composers of these divine things could not have executed them better themselves : I get up, a thousand Bravos are heard immediately, the gentlemen are all eager to conduct me to my place ; every eye is fixed upon me, every body crowds about me, congratulates me, and proclaims me a professor—a professor ! is it possible that this should not a little turn one's head ?”

“I can suppose,” said Amanda, “how much you must both enjoy such flattering success ; but I prefer lasting happiness to transient admiration, and therefore have devoted myself to painting, because it conduces to more solid enjoyment. You are both anxious to shine in the great world, I am not inspired with a like ambition. I am never more contented and happy than when alone. The power of perpetuating in my remembrance interesting scenery which I may visit no more, a rural situation associated with some pleasing recollection,

the likeness of a friend, the flower that I have cherished, is so gratifying and independent a pleasure, that I would not exchange it for any that other accomplishments can offer. I have no satisfaction in those applauses that come from the lips and are disowned by the heart. When I am before my humble easel, I forget the universe of which I am retracing a minute part, and find my employment wholly sufficient for my happiness."

"Oh!" replied Charlotte, "you can never make me believe that the whole days you pass before your canvass, without dressing, and smeared over with paint, are to be compared to an evening at a ball."—"Nor to the simplest concert," interposed Cecilia. "You deceive yourselves, my dear sisters. The more I consider my employment and yours, the more I find reason to rejoice at having preferred an art which keeps me on good terms with myself, and which will prove a valuable resource, whatever may be my future situation."

"Pooh! pooh!" said Charlotte, twirling round on her feet, clapping her hands, and humming the air of a waltz, "with our fortune and family, we can only be destined to spend, never to want."

"My dear Charlotte, we have seen people whose opulence has been equal to ours, fall at length under misfortunes."

"Well," observed Cecilia, "it appears to me, that, in this case, music would present a resource as well as painting."

"Undoubtedly, my dear Cecilia, if in cul-

tivating it you did not prefer execution to a real knowledge of the science. To speak freely, your playing, though excellent, is only the effect of practice. You are ignorant even of the first rules of harmony. If I were in your place, I would, before six months were past, make myself mistress of the theory of music. When you have once attained this, you will have secured a valuable acquisition for your whole life; it will be a consolation to you under misfortune, and a resource in indigence."

The three sisters would often dispute in this manner when they were together; and Cecilia, who could not deny the justice of what Amanda said, attempted several times to study harmony, and not to confine herself merely to execution; but the facility of shining by a talent that one possesses renders the study required for a talent that one has not, very irksome. Thus the young professor, led away by her superficial taste, and seduced by the praises that she never failed to receive, contented herself with executing in a very superior manner the pieces in which she had perfected herself by dint of practice, though she could not read a line of the easiest music at sight. But while Cecilia and Charlotte were engrossing the applauses of crowds as unthinking as themselves, the more retired Amanda did not fail to obtain the just and honourable reward of her zeal and labour. Without making herself known as an artist, several charming pictures of her painting were hung up in the house, and gained the approbation of

the best judges in the art. This impartial testimony was a thousand times more grateful to her than the reiterated acclamations that her two sisters excited in the brilliant circles of Paris.

At the memorable period of the Revolution, which effected a total change in the destinies of France, when so many fortunes were destroyed, so much innocent blood was shed, and to which numbers of those who were most distinguished by birth or merit fell victims; neither Count Harcourt nor his daughters escaped the general proscription. They were first carried to the castle of Saint Germain, in the neighbourhood of which the Count had a considerable estate; he was afterwards transferred alone to Paris, to one of those prisons whence no one ever expected to go out but to death. Escaping from it, however, almost by a miracle, he was concealed in the house of an old servant of his father's, called Anthony, who lived in a humble dwelling on the banks of the Marne. Here, for two years, he received every attention which the circumstances of his protector could afford; but the latter having lost all his little savings, owing to their being unluckily placed in dishonest hands, was himself established in a very humble situation, as a fisherman at Saint-Maur just below the park of Vincennes. It was by his assistance that the Count escaped, and under his roof that he remained, disguised in a mean dress, passing for his own relation.

To the utmost simplicity of taste and a love

of rural habits, which he derived from having lived much in the country, Count Harcourt united a most amiable disposition, so that he found no difficulty in accommodating himself to his new situation.

He was known only at Saint-Maur as the cousin of Master Anthony, and he assisted him in his labours, sometimes by rowing for him upon the Marne, and sometimes by making or repairing his nets. He even obtained a high reputation in his profession, and passed for the most expert fisherman thereabouts.

Sheltered from all danger by this happy obscurity, he became at last attached to it; gratified by enjoying one of the noblest privileges of man, the power of supporting his existence and his liberty by his labour. He would willingly have renounced for ever the wealth and rank to which he was born, and have passed the rest of his life unknown under the simple guise of a fisherman, in the cottage of Master Anthony, if he could but have been joined by his daughters.

Amanda, Cecilia, and Charlotte, were detained in the castle of Saint-Germain, where they had been at first confined with their father. Left in the most cruel uncertainty as to his fate, they had but little hope of hearing any other intelligence of him than of his having fallen a victim to their merciless persecutors, when they one day received a note announcing that he was in safety. This was conveyed to them by means of the courageous

Anthony, who, pretending some family business, obtained a passport to come to Saint-Germain, and there contrived means to get access to their prison. He found them together in a small vaulted chamber, in one of the towers of the castle, which had a grated window that looked towards the country. They were wholly ignorant as to the fate that might await them, nor could form any conjecture why they had been suffered to live so long ; the probability seemed either that their sex and youth had disarmed the fury of their tyrants, or that they were considered as of so little importance that they were wholly neglected and forgotten.

Their joy was excessive on hearing all Master Anthony's details respecting their father, and he had scarcely breath to answer the numberless questions they asked him, so much was he affected by their gratitude, and confused by their caresses. At last, after having consoled them with the hope that they might one day see their father again, he quitted them, to return and rejoice the Count with the intelligence that his daughters were yet living ; equally inspiring him, in his turn, with the sweet hope that he might yet before his death embrace his children once more.

While Count Harcourt remained in this situation, as happy as he could be, separated from his daughters, his property had all been confiscated and sold. Thus, when the resources which these young ladies had brought with them were exhausted, they had no means of subsist-

ence beyond the general allowance made to all prisoners, excepting what compassion for their youth and misfortunes procured them, and they were soon by the rapacity of their barbarous guards reduced to the most bitter distress ; they were even in want of some of the first necessities of life. Strange as it may appear, that those who almost debarred them of the means of sustaining their existence should allow them to retain what they must have considered as absolute superfluities, yet, besides the implements necessary to Amanda's painting, they had still with them a few books, a guitar, and a piano forte, which had been sent to their prison by some persons who were disposed to show them kindness.

Cécilia, whose gratification in her music had been founded only on the applauses of the company before whom she played, now exercised her fine talent of execution in vain ; the tones of the piano, it is true, resounded through the impenetrable vault under which she and her sisters lived ; but, with the exception of Amanda, who had always a pleasure in hearing her, there was nobody to attend to or applaud her.—Charlotte, still constantly changing from one pursuit to another without being steady to any thing, was most commonly seated in an attitude of negligence and mortification, doing nothing ; or, if she took up a book, she soon dropped asleep, and let it fall at her feet before she had read many pages.—Amanda, on the contrary, was constantly employed in sketching

from the grated window the beautiful view that it commanded ; and it was fortunately one of the finest in the delightful environs of Saint-Germain.

It had been made a question in the castle whether Cecilia should not be deprived of the instrument which was her only consolation, but this was averted by the prudence and address of Amanda. It occurred to her that she might, by means of her talent for painting, be able to soften the ferocity of their gaoler, as she had no doubt that he would be susceptible of any species of bribery ; she thought, besides, that she might at the same time procure to her sisters and herself some of the comforts of which they were destitute. She therefore applied to her painting with redoubled diligence ; and when she had finished several pictures of different kinds, she got them sold at Paris by the assistance of the principal gaoler, to whom she promised half the profits for his trouble. As the great merit of these productions always ensured him a ready sale for them, he was assiduous in procuring the industrious artist whatever she had occasion for to continue her labours ; and though he deceived her without any hesitation as to the real prices he obtained for her works, he yet brought her money sufficient to purchase many little articles which softened to herself and her sisters the rigours of their painful captivity. Thus the dirty damp chamber that they inhabited was furnished by degrees with all the appen-

dages necessary to their different occupations, and became a kind of repository of the arts which almost obliterated the recollection of its being a prison.

Cecilia and Charlotte, whose levity and vanity were insensibly subdued by their confinement, never ceased expressing their gratitude to their sister, and acknowledging the advantage of cultivating one talent to perfection.—“Oh! if ever we are released from this castle,” said the former, “with what steadiness and zeal will I devote myself to the study of harmony and composition!”—“Since we cannot contribute by our talents,” added the latter, “to relieve our fate, we must, my good Cecilia, devote ourselves day and night to needle-work, in order to assist Amanda in defraying the general expenses of our existence; we have hitherto depended entirely upon her, which is taxing her exertions too far.”

“Do not say so,” replied Amanda, pressing her sisters to her heart; “for it has procured me, even in the bosom of captivity, the greatest happiness I ever enjoyed in my life. Let me still supply those means which have placed us out of the reach of indigence, and soothed our calamities.”

To such generous affection Cecilia and Charlotte could only reply by returning her embraces, for their hearts were too full to speak. But, ashamed now of continuing to live in idle dependence, they exerted themselves to become proficient in the use of the needle, that

by their labours they might contribute towards the general stock. Not that they wholly renounced their other pursuits; on the contrary, they made a daily progress in them; and thus, by the present tenor of their lives, converted their misfortunes into a blessing.

But that Providence who always watches over the unfortunate, and sooner or later extends its protecting hand towards them, soon awarded to the good and generous Amanda the still greater recompense of finding in her talent a fresh source of comfort, a recompense worthy of her courage and resignation.

In looking over a parcel of brushes and canvass which the gaoler had just brought her from Paris, her eye was caught by something written in pencil upon one of the pieces of canvass; when on examining it she read as follows: "Take notice of the handle to the largest brush."—Surprised, and trembling with emotion, she took up the brush eagerly; when she perceived that the handle screwed together in the middle, and opening it she drew out a letter from her father, accompanied by the following note: "Put your answer into the handle of this brush; say that it does not suit you, and return it by the gaoler."

Amanda and her sisters, overjoyed at receiving intelligence from this tenderest of fathers, which re-assured them anew as to his fate, and desired information from them respecting their cruel situation, read and kissed the letter a hundred and a hundred times.

They lost no time in replying to all their affectionate parent's inquiries, and enclosed their united answer in the manner indicated, subjoining these words: "We trust to you our secret and our lives. We are ignorant who you may be; but Heaven will no doubt condescend to our wishes, and in time gratify us with knowing to whom we are so much indebted."

Amanda gave the brush to the gaoler, who went the same day to Paris, and carried it back to its original owner. He pretended to make some difficulty about taking it again, but at last exchanged it for another, which the formidable Argus punctually delivered to his "dear prisoner," as he called Amanda. She on her part, when he brought it, could not resist asking him the name of the person at whose shop he bought her colours and canvass. "It is Bernard," replied the gaoler bluntly, "the dealer in pictures, who lives in the Louvre; yours have all been sold to him. Oh, he is a connoisseur! and I have promised never to carry your pictures to any body else; he cheápens terribly, but he pays well."—These words were to Amanda like a ray of light after a long storm. She knew that this Bernard was a most respectable man, to whom her father had rendered some important services; and she did not doubt that he was in this way endeavouring to requite them. A thought now suddenly struck her, that by his means she might be able to transmit one of

her performances to Saint-Maur ; and she told her gaoler that she was going to begin a new picture, which would be finished as soon as possible, and which, she added in a significant manner, she hoped would fetch a good price.

As soon as the three sisters were alone, and had repeated their blessings on the ingenious Bernard, they examined the last brush that had been sent, and found the handle similar to that of the former. They took advantage of this happy device to keep up a regular correspondence with their father, and it was carried on in the same manner for near a year, in defiance of those by whom they were so narrowly watched.

Amanda, satisfied that the picture which she projected would only pass from the hands of the worthy Bernard into those of her father, yielded to the full impulse of her imagination, and exerted all the powers of her genius to present the latter with the most impressive pledge which could be devised of her filial piety. She represented herself sitting in the old room they inhabited, holding in her hand a miniature portrait of him, and looking at it with an air expressive of her regret at their long and cruel separation. Cecilia and Charlotte were standing near her, with their attention fixed on the same object. They were all striking likenesses, and their countenances seemed expressive of one united sentiment, as if offering up an inward prayer to Heaven to bless the object whose likeness they

were contemplating. In order to promote their interests with the gaoler by flattering his self-love, she had the address to introduce him on one side of the picture sweeping out their forlorn habitation, and regarding his unfortunate prisoners with a degree of interest which he could not resist. In different parts of the picture were her own easel, Cecilia's piano-forte, and a table, on which were some pieces of Charlotte's needle-work with a few books. Every thing was depicted with equal character, delicacy and truth. Even the impenetrable walls which separated them from a world of which they were formed to be the pride and ornament, were so forcibly characterized, that they excited a lively sympathy for the sufferers enclosed within them. The very dampness of the vault seemed to be felt, and the old pillars appeared mouldering away, even as the eye was wandering over them. A ray of sunshine from the grated window fell upon the three sisters, seeming to re-animate their bosoms, and announce the end of their misfortunes.

"Take this," said Amanda, when she placed her production in the gaoler's hand, "I have here done my utmost, and if I am not mistaken it will produce us a handsome sum of money."—"It is you!" exclaimed the gaoler, "and your sisters. Ha! and this is me, with my woollen cap upon my head, my pipe in my mouth, the bunch of keys at my girdle, and that watchful eye that nothing can escape. 'Tis very like indeed."—"Tell the dealer," added

Amanda, “that these are the three daughters of Count Harcourt in their prison; and I am sure that, though hastily done, he will give you twice as much for this as any of my other pictures.”—“Oh, let me alone, I know my business,” replied the gaoler; and the first moment that he could venture to absent himself from the castle for awhile, he hastened to Monsieur Bernard. At sight of the picture the good man could scarcely restrain his emotions, or forbear bursting into tears; but assuming a sharp and abrupt tone, with the affected indifference of a dealer who wants to make a good bargain, he said at first that he never bought family pictures.—“Only look, however,” returned the gaoler, “at these three pretty ladies. And then here is myself, and what is more, though I am a gaoler, you see I look as if I had some pity in me: this is so uncommon, that I am sure it ought to make the thing of great value.”—“I must own,” replied Bernard significantly, “that this does not produce an ill effect in the picture, and to tell you the truth, it is for the sake of that principally I take it: what do you ask for it?”—“Twenty-five pounds at the lowest.”—“Twenty-five pounds! It is as much as I can do to afford half the money, and I would not even give that if it were not for your being there; for I expect that will some day do you great honour, and acquire you the esteem of all good people.”—“Well then, let it be twelve pounds, but I must have ready money.”—“I

never buy any thing on credit.”—Bernard immediately paid the gaoler twelve pounds, from which the latter first deducted a third for himself, and then divided the remainder with Amanda, protesting that he had sold her production for only the double of what he gave her. She, whose principal interest in the sale was to present her father with a tender proof of the duty and affection of his children, affected to be perfectly satisfied, and would willingly even have given him the half of what he brought her, if the money had not been necessary to their own subsistence.

What Amanda wished and hoped immediately took place. The worthy picture-dealer hastened to Saint-Maur without delay, accompanied by his new purchase. When he arrived there, Count Harcourt was absent fishing with his faithful Anthony. Monsieur Bernard took advantage of his absence to prepare him the most agreeable surprise possible at his return. Intrusting his secret to the good fisherman's wife, and making her promise not to reveal it to the Count, he hung the picture near his bed; and as no time had been afforded for framing it, he wreathed it round with a garland, composed of roses, lilies, and everlastings; which done, he hastened back to Paris.

In the evening the Count and his companion returned, after having had a most successful day's work. When their little supper was over and their usual conversation at an end, the

Count took a lamp, and retired to his humble apartment; where, notwithstanding the content with which he bore his own lot, he often indulged in the most melancholy reflections on the fate of his daughters. Such was the disposition of his mind, when on entering the room his eyes were instantly caught by the testimony of filial piety newly placed near his bed. It is impossible to describe his surprise and emotion. He exclaimed aloud, he extended his arms towards these faithful resemblances of the only treasures remaining to him in the world, tears streamed down his venerable cheeks, and he exclaimed in broken accents, "My children! . . . my dear, dear children!"

On hearing his exclamation the fisherman and his wife ran into the room, and, seeing what had thus affected him, could not sufficiently admire the picture, or find words to express their pity for the Count at being separated from such charming creatures.—"They seem to speak to me," resumed the Count, "to call me father!"—Then observing the wreaths of flowers, "And these flowers," he added, "are truly emblematic of them; the lilies and the roses represent their innocence and their bloom, and the everlastings their affection for me. This is Bernard's doing, I am sure. Nobody but he could have been the interpreter between me and my children in such a manner. There is no one but this worthy excellent man, who could have conceived so

happy an idea : Oh ! how much that idea adds to the delight received from the picture itself !”

Anthony's wife could not now retain the secret any longer, but owned that it was Monsieur Bernard's doing. Some days after he returned with a magnificent frame, and, putting the picture into it, replaced it in its former situation. Count Harcourt, after testifying the utmost gratitude to the discreet agent of his daughters, charged him with conveying a letter to them, in which he forcibly expressed the supreme pleasure that the dear resemblances of them had given him. “ Till now,” he said, “ I have dreaded the moment when, retiring alone to my small apartment, silence and solitude left me a prey to the keenest regrets at the fate which separates us. At present I give up my daily occupations with a lighter heart ; and when I have fulfilled my labour, and have been successful in fishing for my faithful host, I return with joy to the cottage, and run to see you, my beloved children. I only leave you to take a moderate supper, and when it is over hasten to converse with you, till a sweet sleep closes my eyelids. On awakening in the morning I greet you with my blessing, and go to my day's work in the happy assurance of seeing you again when it is over. O my good Amanda, to you do I owe this inexpressible pleasure ! from your talents is derived the consolation that lulls me into a sweet forgetfulness of my sufferings !—May Heaven doubly bless and reward you for it !”

Count Harcourt from this time never failed, morning and evening, to contemplate with the tenderest affection the portraits of his daughters, and to talk with them as if they could hear and answer him : when he went out, he threw a veil over the picture to conceal it from indiscreet observation.

The time at length came when this tender father was re-united to his children. The gloomy horizon which had so long encircled France, and brought upon her such tremendous storms, began to brighten ; Justice regained her sword and balance, of which Anarchy had long deprived her ; and at her aspect the execrable reign of Violence ceased ; Terror fled in her turn affrighted and appalled ; proscriptions were at an end, and the doors of the prisons were thrown open.

Count Harcourt, through the zeal and exertions of the indefatigable Bernard, was not long in obtaining his liberty. The first use he made of it was to solicit that of his daughters, and when obtained he hastened himself to bring them back from their prison. Bernard, their generous protector, and the good Anthony were present at a meeting so deeply affecting to all parties. The Count and his daughters seemed scarcely able to believe that they were actually re-united, and in the tenderest embraces gave way to the overflowing of their hearts.

Cecilia and Charlotte, who for more than a year had been entirely devoted to their dif-

ferent pursuits, now defied the power of misfortune to reduce them again to misery ; they had acquired resources within themselves, which might equally be applied either to relieving them from a state of poverty, or to soothing them under the afflictions of the mind.

“ It is to your sister,” added the Count, “ in conjunction with the forcible lesson of your late situation, that you owe this inestimable advantage. O my dear Amanda, recapitulate with me all the blessings derived from the talent you have so well cultivated. It has amused, and often even made you forget your captivity ; it has saved you and your sisters from some of its worst horrors ; it has deceived the vigilance of your guards, and procured your unhappy father the greatest consolation he could receive in his misfortunes ; it has given the good Bernard an opportunity of acquitting himself towards me ; it has corrected the foibles of your sisters ; and will now, with their joint assistance, place us above that want into which the loss of our fortune has plunged us.”

The Count’s loss of fortune was, however, only temporary ; as he had not quitted France, his property was soon restored to him. The first use he made of it was to secure to the good Anthony and his wife an annuity, that made their old age comfortable and happy. He then remitted to the generous Bernard the several sums paid by him to the avaricious gaoler for Amanda’s pictures, and insisted on his

keeping the collection, reserving only to himself that of his daughters in their prison : this he placed in his drawing-room at Paris, engraving underneath it the following inscription :

“ A superficial knowledge of many acquirements produces merely levity and conceit. To cultivate only such as we can carry to some perfection, is to secure the means of amusing our leisure, of supporting the misfortunes of life, and of promoting the happiness of all around us.”



The Collection at the Ball.

THE COLLECTION AT THE BALL.

No festival can be complete which is not shared by the indigent and the unfortunate.

THE impresson made upon my mind by the relation of a fact of which one of my relatives was the fortunate witness, makes me hope, my Flavia, that it may produce an equal effect upon thine. It will, I trust, interest thee more particularly, by the amiable picture it presents of a venerable old man, whose presence I have sometimes seen thee eagerly seek. This anecdote, in giving a just idea of the most exemplary piety, may be a lesson to overstrained moralists, who censure severely some of the most delightful sallies of the virtuous mind. It forcibly illustrates to those hard-hearted egotists who think only of themselves—to those senseless Sibarites, who, sunk in the bosom of pleasure and luxury, never bestow a thought on the numerous sons and daughters of misery by whom they are surrounded, of how much happiness they fatally deprive themselves.

Paris will long cherish with the warmest gratitude and affection, the memory of that venerable patriarch, who for nearly a century was the admiration of his country, the model to all people of real worth and goodness,—of that excellent pastor, who amid the wildest

tempests remained the faithful guardian of his flocks ;—of that prince of the church, who by his merits may be said to have increased the lustre of the Roman purple ;—in a word, of the Cardinal du Belloy. It is sufficient to name him, to point out at once the most indulgent pontiff, the most enlightened minister, the father of the poor, the support of the unfortunate, the representative on earth of that God whose goodness he constantly endeavoured to imitate.

The eminent rank to which his virtues raised him, made no change in the mildness and gentleness of his habits, nor in the affecting simplicity of his character. His palace was open to every body ; it was sufficient to be unfortunate, to obtain ready access to it. The time which he could spare from his devotions was consecrated to administering to the temporal or spiritual wants of others. Occupied incessantly with endeavouring to make the religion of which he was the apostle, beloved by its votaries, he never suffered his benevolent hands to wield the poniards of fanaticism. *Convince, but do not tyrannize !*—such was his motto. To command any one to believe, was, according to his opinion, to destroy faith ; but to engage confidence by true piety, to persuade by example, to soften by charity, to subdue the heart by moderation and tolerance—these were the only arms with which this admirable prelate endeavoured to make converts—these were the means he employed to attract the love

and respect of those by whom he was surrounded.

It was above all when he officiated at the church of Notre Dame that he experienced a delight by which he was so much affected, that it even sometimes made his voice falter, and brought tears of rapture into his eyes. This temple, vast and magnificent in itself, and rendered still more remarkable by the memorable events which have taken place within its bosom, could then scarcely contain the crowds that thronged to it to contemplate their honoured pastor, the pride and glory of the country. The most celebrated men of all classes and of all religions were to be seen there; citizens and foreigners followed him as he passed along, eager to see and admire that venerable head, where, beneath the snow of nearly a hundred winters, so much life and animation still appeared, so much mildness, yet so much dignity. All were eager to receive his blessing; all invoked blessings upon him.

Those who study nature, and the different characters of men, have often remarked that persons of true piety always bear in their countenance that tranquil delight which is produced by the calm that reigns in the soul from the constant habit of doing good; and the mild gaiety which reigned in the countenance of the Cardinal du Belloy was a strong illustration of this truth. In the confined circles of friend-

ship, as in the midst of the most numerous assemblies, the smile that indicated the love of society constantly illumined his countenance ; he listened with pleasure to the anecdotes of the day, to the sprightly sallies that enliven conversation without offending against religion and good morals ; he loved an innocent joke, nor took offence at the little gallantries which form so distinguishing a feature of the French character.

He was bishop of Marseilles when the hardships of a very severe winter extended themselves even to the southern provinces of France. Recalling, by his virtues, the idea of the celebrated Monsieur de Belzunce, who distinguished himself so highly by his piety and devotion to the service of his fellow-citizens at the disastrous epoch when the plague made such ravages in that city, Monsieur du Belloy was unwearied in the distribution of alms, in administering relief and consolation to the abodes of misery. He did not delegate to others this honourable employment ; he reserved it for himself, and by his revered presence doubled the benefits which he conferred. He had a large fire kindled every day in the court-yard before his palace, round which were constantly assembled a number of the poor, particularly maimed and disabled mariners. He often joined them, and, entering into conversation with them, exhorted them to brave the rigours of the cold, and set them the example of it him-

self. The gates of his palace were always thronged with a grateful multitude, who, the moment they saw their pastor and benefactor, made the air resound with their shouts and blessings: it seemed as if it was an adored father appearing among his numerous family. His mansion had rather the appearance of an hospital, than of the abode of grandeur and opulence.

The cold, however, diminishing towards the end of January, the greater part of these unfortunate objects were then enabled to resume their occupations, and the episcopal palace was no longer surrounded except by a few infirm old men who were unable to work. The good bishop, relieved from a great part of the cares which his benevolence had imposed upon him, thought that he might now be permitted to give a grand dinner, according to his usual custom at this season of the year, to those persons of the town who were his most usual visitors. Among others invited to this dinner was the Commandant of the place, with his wife and their only daughter Emily. This young lady, though scarcely yet sixteen years of age, was already celebrated throughout the town for the sweetness and benevolence of her disposition, for her attention to the poor, and for the kindness with which her charities were always distributed. The pious bishop had often met with her in his own visits to the abodes of indigence, where, accompanied only by an elderly woman, who was more of a friend than a governess, she

was occupied in administering consolation to those who stood in need of it. To increase the charm of her good works, she always desired that they might remain a secret between herself and those who were benefited by them.

Monsieur du Belloy received the young Emily with a peculiar degree of kindness and interest. While he was occupied in doing the honours of his house to his guests, Emily placed herself by a window which looked upon the court, where being recognised by some of the poor and infirm, who were always attending about the house, they were holding up their hands to her in attitudes of supplication. She was at first on the point of yielding to the emotions which such a spectacle could not fail of exciting in a bosom like hers, and opening the window to throw them out what money she had about her; but, on a moment's reflection, she thought that this would have been arrogating to herself the rights of her venerable host; that it belonged to him alone to relieve the supplicants who presented themselves before his palace. What above all excited her compassion, and her regret that she did not think herself justified in bestowing her alms at the moment, was a young woman with two children by her side, and a third in her arms which she was suckling; she had the appearance of a foreigner, and, by her manner, it seemed evident that asking alms was not a thing to which she had been accustomed. Her paleness and

the feebleness of her steps indicated, as Emily thought, that it was long since she had taken any food, and the signs she made seemed to say, that her child sought in vain at her breast the nourishment of which it stood in need.

Emily, with her eyes fixed upon this unfortunate creature, experienced emotions which she scarcely knew how to control, and would perhaps have yielded to them, had not dinner been at that moment announced. The worthy prelate giving his hand to her mother, the whole company followed into the dining-room; but the bishop as he quitted the room, casting his eyes on Emily, perceived her emotions, and was anxious to learn the cause of them. His astonishment and curiosity were not a little increased, by observing that at dinner she accepted every thing offered to her with an extraordinary avidity, and gave a part immediately to one of her father's servants who waited behind her chair, with which he instantly went out of the room, returning only to receive something else from the hands of Emily, which again he carried away. The delight that sparkled in her eyes, and the significant signs made to her by the servant, increased the good bishop's curiosity to such a degree, that when dinner was over he could not help applying to his fair guest for an explanation of the mystery.

She on her part, confident that what she had done could not fail of being approved by such

a man as her host; frankly acknowledged the constraint she had been obliged to put upon herself in not assisting the poor whom she had seen from the window; but that the appeals made by the young woman to her compassion were wholly irresistible, nor could she forbear, though she acknowledged it to be an encroachment upon him, administering the relief he had witnessed. “Indeed, sir,” said she with the sweetest and most affecting tone and manner, “I thought that a mother suckling her child ought not to suffer hunger at the gates of your palace; and I felt assured of your concurrence with my sentiments, that *No festival can be complete which is not shared by the indigent and the unfortunate.*”

“You are in the right, madam,” replied the venerable prelate, taking her hands respectfully, and pressing them between his; “these are sentiments indeed worthy of you. The pious maxim you have inculcated cannot be too strongly enforced; I promise you that it shall often be repeated by me; and when I cite you as the model for young people of your age,—when I represent you as one of the fairest and most virtuous of your sex,—I shall say, after you, that *No festival can be complete which is not shared by the indigent and the unfortunate.*”

The Commandant and his wife were not less affected than the good bishop with the sentiments Emily had expressed, and the congratu-

lations they received from all the company present filled their bosoms with the most delightful transports that can be experienced by parents.

A short time after, the next house to that in which the Commandant resided took fire, from the imprudence of the owner, who was a turner, going with a candle into his work-room. The flames had already begun to catch one of the wings of the Commandant's house, and it would perhaps have been reduced to ashes but for the eagerness of the people in rendering every assistance possible to save it. Such were the zeal and assiduity shown by all for its preservation, that they seemed like children anxious to save the property of a parent. Those, above all, who had been the objects of Emily's benevolence were eager to evince their gratitude by their exertions in her father's service. The fire was consequently stopped before it had done any injury of importance to the Commandant's house; but the poor turner's was reduced to ashes, and himself with a numerous family deprived entirely of their means of support.

This misfortune happened just before the season when it was usual for the Commandant to give a grand ball to the officers of the garrison and the principal inhabitants of the town. A very long gallery, which ran from one wing of the house to the other, was on this occasion elegantly decorated with beautiful chandeliers, interspersed with flowers and treillage. All that taste, opulence and rank could devise was

combined to render the entertainment one of the most splendid ever given in the place. Emily had planned every thing which she thought could be most pleasing and gratifying to the young people of her own age; and she herself, who was to preside as queen of the ball, was presented with a crown of white roses, as a symbol of the purity of her soul. The company consisted of more than twelve hundred persons, all of whom were emulous to appear with the utmost splendour that their rank and fortunes would permit.

The good bishop, without being the enemy of innocent pleasures, yet on occasions such as these seldom passed the evening out of his own palace. As he returned after dinner to his usual sitting-room, he said to his servant, "Simon, you must have my robes ready, I shall go out this evening at eleven; order the coachman to prepare my state-carriage with my two best horses, and all my servants to be in their best liveries." The servant looked surprised, and observed that he supposed his lordship was going to some great christening or marriage. "I am going to fulfil an important duty," said the bishop; "so observe that every thing is ready according to my directions."

The servant executed the orders punctually, and at the hour appointed the carriage was at the door, and the prelate appeared dressed in his episcopal robes. The orders they had received occasioned abundant speculation among

the servants, and each had his conjecture as to their worthy master's motives in this nocturnal sally. As he got into the carriage he said to the footman who held the door, "To the hotel of the Commandant."—"My lord!" said the man, almost stupefied with astonishment. "Did you not hear?" said the bishop; "To the hotel of the Commandant."—"My lord does not know, perhaps, that there is a great ball there to-night?"—"I know it very well."—"That all the young people, and all the military officers, are there?"—"I know it very well," said the bishop, smiling, "and intend to make one of the party."—The servant then shut the door of the carriage, and gave his order to the coachman, "To the hotel of the Commandant."—"What do you mean, you fool, with your Commandant?"—"I thought, like you, that I did not hear right; but there you are to go."—"Don't tell me, I'm sure his lordship would not go to the ball."—"Tis a fancy he has taken, and he won't be put off."—"Let those drive him that will then, I'm sure I won't."—"You'd have him go on foot, I suppose?"—The good bishop here, smiling involuntarily at this debate between his faithful servants, let down the front glass, and said mildly, "Yes, Thomas, I would have you drive to the Commandant's house."—"Well," said the footman, "am I right or not?"—"I don't know what to make of it," said the coachman; "a bishop at a ball will be quite a new thing. If it were any other than his lordship, I should

think he was mad—but God's will be done! So, jehu!" and off he set at a full gallop.

They arrived at the Commandant's among a crowd of other carriages, the company in which were all in the utmost astonishment to see the bishop's carriage making one among the throng. He alighted, and traversed a long vestibule, surrounded by men and women who looked at him earnestly, scarcely able to believe their eyes. At the same time one of the gentlemen ushers appointed for the occasion, hastening up stairs to the gallery where the young people were dancing, announced the Lord Bishop! "Is it possible!" exclaimed the Commandant. "Indeed, sir, it is very true; I was stepping forward to present him with a nosegay, supposing I was to receive some lady of distinction, and never was so astonished in my life as when I saw his lordship; he is now coming up stairs."—The Commandant immediately ordered the music and dancing to stop, and a dead calm succeeded in a moment to the noise and bustle; every one drew back to show the respect with which they were inspired by the presence of the venerable prelate, nor could refrain from speculating inwardly upon the motive which could have attracted him into such an assembly.

The Commandant received him just as he arrived at the top of the staircase:—"This is indeed an honour," he said, "which I was far from expecting."—"And why so?" answered the prelate, with a tone and manner of more

than even his usual mildness and affability, "I am not by any means averse to pleasures confined within the bounds of propriety; they are necessary to youth, and you behold in me one of the most devoted cavaliers of your amiable daughter.—But what do I see!" continued he as he entered the gallery, "no more music, no more dancing?"—"Do not be surprised at this sudden change," returned the Commandant, "it is a homage paid to your lordship, and to the sacred character you bear."—"Well, then," said the bishop, "since to compliment me this amiable assembly have suspended their amusements, I hasten to take advantage of it, in order to justify, if possible, a step which austerity may perhaps think it has some right to condemn." Then addressing himself to the lovely Emily, who had approached him with respectful eagerness, he said, "It is you, madam, who are the occasion of my appearing here at this moment. You are doubtless astonished; but you will recollect that not many days ago, when I had the honour of receiving you at my palace, you observed that *No festival could be complete unless shared by the indigent and the unfortunate*. I promised to bear constantly in mind this excellent maxim, and to bring it forward upon every possible occasion. Since, therefore, you have now assembled here all the most distinguished, the most amiable persons that Marseilles can boast, and receive from them the

homage which is so justly your due,—it must not be forgotten, that near you languishes a family, reduced, by a fire at their humble dwelling, to the most deplorable necessity. It is not a very large sum that will be requisite to restore these unfortunate sufferers to ease and happiness; permit me then to accompany you round the room as a joint appellant with yourself to the bounty of your amiable guests in their behalf. I only ask of you, when you present to any one this plate consecrated to collecting alms for the poor, to repeat the adage which does you so much honour, and which from your mouth will appear like the voice of an angel speaking his message from heaven, *No festival can be complete unless shared by the indigent and the unfortunate.*”

Every one applauded with transport this proposal of the excellent bishop, while Emily, whose eyes sparkled with a delight that greatly increased her beauty, hastened to take the plate with one hand; and giving the other to her venerable cavalier, he handed her round, while according to his request she frequently repeated her interesting adage. The utmost eagerness was shown by all the guests to make their offerings, and prove to the excellent prelate and the charming young creature whom he attended, the effect which so interesting a scene produced upon their hearts, so that in a short time the sum of five hundred pounds

was collected. On such an occasion beneficence is commonly profuse, ostentation imitates it, and indigence is relieved.

When the collection was concluded, the good bishop handed his amiable Emily back to her seat amid a general murmur of applause, which ran through the whole room, and then said to her, "Now that the young mother of the poor of Marseilles has so admirably performed her part under that character, I have only to entreat the queen of this ball to give her orders for the amusements which my arrival suspended, to recommence. The deference shown me, which will always remain gratefully impressed upon my heart, would be changed into the most cruel privation, or into a hint to withdraw, if I were longer to feel that I interfere with the pleasures of others; and I really am so happy among this company, that I should be sorry not to be suffered to remain here awhile longer."

Emily, more than ever charmed with her cavalier, instantly obeyed. Orders were given for the music to strike up, and the dancing to be resumed; and in a moment the air echoed again with the sounds of joy and hilarity. The good bishop retired into a corner of the room, where he stood, with a countenance expressive of the extremest candour and benevolence, contemplating the happy groupe, among whom the utmost grace combined with the strictest decorum was to be observed in all their movements; nor could he forbear often repeating

even with a tear, "How charming is youth!—Oh, how charming is youth!"

After having enjoyed for a short time this charming spectacle he retired, the Commandant himself attending him to his carriage; he was even obliged to lean for support upon the arm of the Commandant, so much was his benevolent mind interested and affected by the scene he had witnessed. He had intended to steal away unperceived by the company,—but he attempted it in vain,—again the dance and the music stopped, while the homage of the whole room attended his departure in like manner as it had been evinced at his entrance. He on his side, still more deeply affected, could not help turning round as he went out at the door, and exclaiming once more—"How charming is youth!—Oh, how charming is youth!"—He ascended his carriage surrounded by a crowd of people, who learning from the servants of the house what was passing had assembled there; and the shouts and benedictions which resounded on all sides, were a strong assurance to the admirable prelate that the step he had taken, far from being condemned, would be ranked among the noblest actions by which his life had been distinguished.

The next day nothing was talked of throughout the town but the COLLECTION AT THE BALL, and it increased tenfold the general admiration in which the good bishop's character was held. Vainly did envy and fanaticism

seek to derogate from the merit of a step for which they could find no precedent; it was legitimized and applauded by gratitude and humanity. Emily, still attended by her venerable cavalier, carried the money collected to the unfortunate sufferers, who falling on their knees could scarcely find words in which to express their acknowledgements and their transports. The honest artisan's house and shop were soon rebuilt exactly such as they had been before the fire; and the whole story had interested the town so much, that all people were eager to afford him their countenance, and his business increased every day. He had thus the happiness of seeing himself enabled to give his numerous family a good education, and to establish them all as they grew up in very advantageous situations. From this time neither the venerable prelate nor the amiable Emily ever appeared in the streets of *Marseilles* without receiving even more marked distinctions than before; and perpetually heard repeated as they passed along, "*No festival can be complete which is not shared by the indigent and the unfortunate.*"

FILIAL HEROISM.

THE intrepid and celebrated Duke of Burgundy, whose valour and temerity acquired him the name of Charles the Bold, after having augmented his hereditary states by numerous conquests, determined at length to erect them into a kingdom under the immediate protection of the Emperor Frederic the Fourth. He had already taken possession of Picardy and Normandy, where he exercised the rights of a conqueror with such barbarous cruelty, that in these unhappy countries he was called the *Terrible*. Every town which resisted his arms was sacked and pillaged, without any regard either for sex or age. Every governor or magistrate who refused to open his gates at the first summons from him was put to the sword. It was the principle of this formidable warrior to dismay his enemies by his rigour, and thus conquer them no less by terror than by the force of his arms.

Louis the Eleventh, jealous of the power of Charles, and too cunning to suffer him to establish a kingdom within his own, exerted all his address to check his career and thwart his projects. The latter in consequence directed his ambitious views to other objects, which seemed to promise him a more easy conquest. He first obtained from Sigismond, duke of



Filial Heroism.



Austria, who had ruined himself by his foolish extravagance, the country of Ferrara and the landgraviate of Alsace, by which he opened himself a road to the invasion of Lorraine.

This country was then under the dominion of René the second, grandson to the good King René, count of Provence and Anjou. The young prince was not terrified either by the extraordinary valour or by the ferocity of Charles the Bold. Strong in the love and fidelity of his subjects, by whom he had been voluntarily chosen as their sovereign, René resisted with determined resolution repeated attacks from Charles. He proved to him that heroism is not confined to any age, and that youth directed by valour and resignation is capable of braving the greatest dangers, of withstanding even those who are grown hoary in the field of honour, and whose heads are covered with renown;—that these qualities supply the place of experience, and practical knowledge in the art of war.

After having formed and been obliged to raise the siege of the principal towns in Lorraine, Charles resolved to attack Nancy. This was in the year 1476. The young duke had gone secretly to the court of France to solicit assistance from Louis the Eleventh, but met with a refusal from that perfidious monarch. Charles taking advantage of his absence began the blockade of the place; but unexpectedly found it defended alike by strong fortifications, and by the devoted courage of the

garrison. The defence was conducted by a governor, whose name is not mentioned in history, though it is well known that he was of a noble family, and of great personal bravery. He opposed a vigorous resistance to the arms of the invader, but unfortunately it was not crowned with the success it merited; he was obliged at length to abandon his opposition, and surrender the town to the conqueror. It was only saved from the usual barbarities of Charles, by an illustrious example of FILIAL HEROISM.

The governor had an only daughter between seventeen and eighteen years of age, called Theresa. This amiable maiden, for the sake of cherishing and protecting the old age of her father, had already refused the homage of many distinguished nobles who solicited her alliance. Her mother did not survive her birth; and such was the profound grief of her father on losing the faithful companion of his life, to whom he was tenderly attached, that it almost overcame his reason; nothing but a strong sense of duty towards his infant had power to calm his mind and reconcile him to existence. Educated in camps, the rival and companion of the bravest cavaliers of his time, his harsh features and rough commanding voice seemed at variance with all the softer feelings of the human heart; and it was only on a more intimate knowledge of him that the sensibility and sweetness of his character were discovered. Thus in the camp he maintained

an inexorable discipline ; his look alone made his soldiers tremble, and his tremendous voice petrified them with fear. But in private life he was a tutelary angel ; his eyes softened, and his mild caressing accents and manner seemed to dispose him rather to obey than command. He was no less beloved, therefore, by the people whom he governed than revered by the soldiers whom he commanded, and dreaded by the enemies of his country. Such was the father of the young and lovely Theresa.

As his high reputation and great influence with the people had essentially forwarded the election of René the second to the dukedom of Lorraine, he was honoured with the full confidence of the young duke, and was immediately made by him governor of Nancy. From this appointment so gratifying to the inhabitants of that town, and from the public admiration and flattering attentions paid by René to the lovely Theresa, a general expectation was entertained that he would select her as the partner of his new dignity, and make her grand duchess of Lorraine ; while the tender and respectful attachment borne by all ranks of people to this model of filial piety made them anticipate such an union with the utmost satisfaction.

It was at this period that Charles the Bold, after having employed all the resources of his military genius to subdue the country round Nancy, formed the siege of the town itself. Notwithstanding the difficulty of victualling the place,

and the absence of the young duke, his faithful adherents for a long time repulsed their antagonist, and obtained some important advantages over his troops. Charles only became on this account the more determined in his purpose, enraged at meeting with a resistance to which he was little accustomed. All the inhabitants of Nancy united to strengthen the garrison, and assist in the general defence. The old men ran through the streets and public places to animate them by their exhortations. The women and children carried stones to the ramparts, to throw down upon the besiegers; and while some remained with the greatest intrepidity to lance them against their enemies, others collected fresh heaps. Immense coppers were filled with oil, which was made boiling hot, and then poured down upon the foe by women of all ranks and ages. The whole town seemed like a single family united to repress some ruffian by whom it was invaded. Never was an instance known where love for their country and fidelity towards their prince had inspired a people to perform greater prodigies of heroism.

Charles seeing his efforts thus baffled, and that the brave Lorrainese were no more intimidated by his formidable arms than terrified by his menaces, suspended the labours of the siege, and proposed a capitulation. He required the gates of the town to be opened to him, engaging to respect every private house, and to protect the inhabitants from pillage; pro-

fessing that he entertained the highest esteem for a people who had shown themselves no less valiant, than faithful to their sovereign. He concluded by declaring that he should consider it as the highest honour to form an alliance with them, and that in making these proposals he was actuated only by the desire of establishing a lasting peace.

These offers from Charles were sincere. Notwithstanding his general barbarity and ambition, there were times when he discovered some signs of sensibility; virtue was not entirely estranged from his arrogant mind, though he was continually hurried away by his thirst of glory and love of power. But he experienced on this occasion what is sooner or later the just punishment of all warriors who are faithless to their word, and do not respect treaties: he was suspected of being only actuated by treachery.

Percy was still smoking with the cruel conflagrations by which he had devastated that fine country, though he had repeatedly sworn to spare and respect it. Normandy was groaning under the ruin with which he had covered its fertile plains; and the town of Liege had recently been the theatre of the most bloody persecutions. The Lorraine, therefore, saw only in the proposals made to them a cruel snare, and resolved to avoid it. The valiant governor especially was among the most incredulous, and by his manly eloquence, no less than from the veneration in

which he was held by the inhabitants, determined them not to accept of any treaty of peace. They accordingly resolved to bury themselves under the ruins of their ramparts, rather than admit within them a warrior without faith, who sported with his promises ; well aware that he would make them pay so much the more dearly for their imprudent credulity, in proportion as he was incensed by the determined resistance he had experienced from them.

Charles informed of their positive refusal, and instructed above all that the governor had animated the town to concur in it by an eloquent harangue, in which he had represented him under the most odious colours, swore to revenge himself. He immediately sent for the last time a herald at arms to announce to the Lorraine, that if they did not deliver up the place on that very day, and acknowledge him as their conqueror, he would storm the town, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. This menace only irritated them still more, and redoubled their courage. The governor, certain that if the town should fall at length he would be the first victim, yet preferred death to disloyalty, and traversed the streets haranguing every body, and exhorting them anew not to yield. He assembled his forces, dispersed them on every point of defence, and made all other dispositions best adapted to resisting the efforts of the besiegers.

Theresa, who in the midst of these dangers

made it her duty not to quit her father, shared his heroic enthusiasm; and, following his example, harangued the women and young girls by whom she was surrounded. She cited to them the sublime example of the women of Beauvais, who did not shrink from the horrors of battle, and faced every danger to prevent this same Charles from penetrating into their walls, and making them the victims of his cruelty.—“There,” said she in a most persuasive tone, “were seen mothers with their timid daughters arming themselves with any weapons that could be obtained, carrying heavy burdens, gathering up broken lances, making them into arrows, tying them with their hair, and with their menacing points overpowering the soldiers of Charles and obliging them to raise the siege. They were not more devoted than we are,” added Theresa, “to a glorious death, they were not so numerous. Why should not we follow the example of these courageous women? why should not we, like them, obtain the just reward of our devotion to our country?”

This speech of Theresa's made a deep impression on every body; the general sentiment was, who should be the first to second her generous ardour, and imitate the heroic women of Beauvais. No kind of fatigue or labour, neither the menaces of a formidable and cruel enemy, nor the dreadful expectation of an assault, had power to intimidate these heroines; the danger of combat seemed to vanish at the

approach of the fatal moment which was to decide their victory or their defeat.

Charles, daily more and more incensed, sought amid the resources of his genius new expedients for the attainment of his object. Taking advantage of a dark night to deceive the besieged, he made several false attacks at different parts of the ramparts, and at the dawn of day re-uniting his choicest troops before one of the bastions which seemed the most damaged, he conducted the assault with so much address and impetuosity, that in less than two hours he opened a breach, and penetrated to the very centre of the town. In the first emotions of his fury he was about to abandon the inhabitants to a general massacre: "Barbarian!" said Theresa, who had been brought into his presence, "if all are to perish, over whom will you reign?"—"Who art thou, audacious woman!" said the conqueror, "who darest to speak to me thus?"—"Your prisoner," answered the determined heroine, "who would prevent your committing this additional deed of cruelty."

The impressive accent in which she spoke, her beauty, and above all her magnanimous resolution, suspended for a moment the fury of Charles. He only required that the Governor should be immediately delivered up to him.

At the solicitation of his daughter, and in compliance with the unanimous wishes of the inhabitants of Nancy, the governor under

the garb of a simple citizen had mingled with the crowd, who all sought to shelter him from the ferocity of the conqueror. Charles therefore found it impossible to satiate his vengeance immediately on the head of this honourable victim; but he offered a considerable reward to whoever would deliver him into his hands. "There is but one person who can discover him to you," said the Governor, without making himself known; "swear upon your bloody sword to grant mercy to all the inhabitants of the town....."—"To grant them mercy!" replied Charles with the most furious indignation; "never! You have contemned my power; you have rejected my offers with insolence, shall I now yield to your prayers? Is it for me to listen to the voice of pity? If fate at this moment spares your Governor, I know well how to discover him, by the terrible example which in your persons I will give to those who dare to brave me, and attempt to stop the course of my victories." Then addressing himself to the officers around him, he ordered that the inhabitants of Nancy should be that instant decimated.

Men, women, and children, were then arranged in a long row, extending from the place where Charles was stationed to the ramparts of the town. The individuals of each family were all assembled together; the daughter supported herself on the arm of her mother; the friend took his place next his friend; a calm resignation appeared on every countenance, all

seemed to court rather than to deprecate that fatal power which was about to choose its victims; each one prayed that fate might point at him, in the hope that some object even dearer than himself might be spared. At last, a herald at arms, upon a signal given by the conqueror, began to number the victims; when an unexpected difficulty arose respecting the very first person upon whom the lot had fallen, which ultimately put an entire stop to this barbarous execution.

Theresa, standing on the right hand of her father, who still appeared under his disguise, followed the motions of the herald at arms with eager inquietude. As he counted with a loud voice, she heard him distinctly, and soon perceived that the number ten would fall upon her beloved parent. She immediately glided away to the other side of him, so that nine fell on that lately devoted head; and she herself stood marked as the first victim. The Governor was so much overcome by this extraordinary act of magnanimity, that he had scarcely power to speak; yet recovering himself, he signified that it was he who was to die; the lot, he said, had fallen upon him, and he would not suffer another to perish in his place. Theresa, still without making it known that the respectable old man she endeavoured to save was her father, asserted that she had taken her place at hazard, that the lot had come fairly upon her, and that she ought to suffer death. The herald at arms, and the at-

tendants who accompanied him, not knowing which of the two to believe, brought them before Charles that he might determine the matter. A scene so extraordinary, and so affecting, excited an emotion in this prince which he could not resist. Perplexed and indecisive, he knew not what part to take, but remained thoughtful and silent. "You hesitate, barbarian!" said Theresa, with a calm dignity which made her ten times more interesting than before; "let me perish, and prolong the career of this old man, whose existence is honoured by sixty years of virtue."—"Heaven avert your yielding to her demand!" exclaimed the Governor in his turn; "what are the virtues of which she speaks in comparison with her sublime sacrifice, which fills every heart with admiration, and which you cannot witness without emotion?"—"My life is less valuable than that of this old man. Every day that he lives is marked by some act of benevolence. Look at his white hairs, they bespeak the head of a family, and should he be cut off they will be left to mourn the best of fathers."—"Look at the bloom of her youth and beauty. She will be yet for a long time the ornament of her sex; and shall she be sacrificed to preserve the few days that can yet remain to me?" Theresa, seeing that Charles fixed his eyes upon her with a milder expression of countenance than before, said to him, "Cease to admire in me what is but a duty: it is a daughter who would save the author of her being: this old man is my father."

—" 'Tis I," interposed the Governor, "that must put an end to your indecision, and induce you to spare without reluctance this model of filial piety. I deliver up to you that enemy on whom you so much desire to wreak your vengeance: you see before you the Governor of Nancy. He would have been delivered up to you at once, if your barbarous fury had not refused to spare, at the price of his head, his faithful fellow-citizens."

At these words, all the inhabitants of the town, whose imaginations were wrought up to the highest point of enthusiasm by the heroism that Theresa had displayed, surrounded the father and daughter, each individual demanding to die in their place.

Charles had never before witnessed so affecting a spectacle. The cries of the suppliant citizens embracing the knees of their Governor, and ready to sacrifice their own lives to save his,—the firm and manly resignation of this venerable old man, offering himself as a victim to procure their safety,—the piercing grief of Theresa, who made a solemn vow to Heaven not to survive her father if he must fall,—produced altogether an effect upon the minds of himself and his soldiers that no words could describe. At last the Governor forcing his way through the crowd, with Theresa hanging on his arm, demanded the decision of their fate: "Neither the one nor the other shall perish," answered eagerly the now vanquished conqueror, "it would be too difficult to decide the

merits of such a contest. You have penetrated to the bottom of my heart ; and if it be glorious to conquer, you make me experience that it is still more delightful to pardon. Enjoy, lovely Theresa, enjoy all the happiness that awaits you ; and receive the reward of that filial heroism, which history will transmit with triumph to the remotest posterity. I grant you not only the life of your excellent father, but the lives of all those citizens who were lately destined to a fate so awful and severe. Do not make me any acknowledgements, for I owe you more than you have received. But for you, my bosom, awake only to the thirst of glory, would never have known the much more delightful sensations which I now feel to be the result of performing an act of clemency."

This speech, from the mouth of the awe-inspiring conqueror, was received with transports of delight. All the inhabitants mingled together, embracing each other, and uttering the wildest cries of joy ; they were joined in them by the soldiers of Charles, who participated the emotion of their master. This prince, having experienced the valour and fidelity of the Lorraine, declared that he would make Nancy the capital of his states, and he instantly replaced the Governor in his rank and dignities. Theresa became more dear than ever to her fellow-citizens. There was no family, no individual who did not consider himself as indebted to her for the preservation of some dear con-

nection, or of his own existence. Her name was never mentioned but with the profoundest veneration, and to the latest period of her days she was incessantly hailed with the benedictions of all around her. Thus she afforded a striking example of the advantages of elevating the mind so as to meet with dignity any circumstances, however embarrassing, in which we may be placed; and illustrated in a striking manner the truth of this axiom, That the surest means of escaping a great danger, is to meet it with COURAGE, with COOLNESS, and with RESIGNATION.

ARROGANCE CORRECTED.

NOTHING is more ridiculous than the mania so frequent amongst mankind, of fancying themselves of an importance that by no means belongs to them,—of supposing themselves endowed with qualities which they really do not possess,—of ascribing to themselves merits to which they have no claim,—of persuading themselves that they attract general attention, and engage all hearts,—while by sensible people they are scarcely noticed at all, and are only noticed by the common run of society for their amusement, as objects of derision, of raillery, or of calumny. Such is the routine of the world, alternately crucifying others or being crucified themselves.

This arrogance, which assumes all kinds of forms, is no less predominant in the one sex than in the other. Contemplate that young man walking down the street with a solemn measured step; his head erect; affecting to be short-sighted, to avoid saluting those he meets, and elbowing every body. He conceives that he unites the fine head of the Antinous to the imposing presence of the Apollo of Belvedere. Observe the laughable importance of yonder clerk, who pretends to receive endless applications on business, and engages for the success of them, though his only occupa-

tion in his office is to transcribe the papers put into his hands.

With the same blindness, the mother of a grown-up family thinks herself still as blooming as her daughters.—The young girl of fifteen considers herself as an accomplished woman, and is surprised that she is not demanded in marriage.—Observe that young lady dancing a waltz, and attracting about her a circle of youths who have just left school for the vacation. She is persuaded that she unites in her dancing the grace and perfection of a performer at the grand opera.—Listen to that girl who is come from school to pass a few days at home, thrumming an air of Haydn's upon her guitar, and throwing her father, mother, grandfather, great uncle, and three aunts into ecstasies ; she is convinced that she equals or even surpasses the greatest masters.

Monsieur Dumont, a wealthy merchant at Paris, and a man of the strictest honour, had two daughters, who equally shared his affection. There was but little difference in their ages ; they were both grown up, and began to appear in the world, but under characters strikingly dissimilar. Adelaide, the eldest, fancied herself a perfect Venus in figure, a Hebe in bloom and grace, a tenth Muse in talents and science. When she appeared in company, or in any public place, her fine eyes were always cast down to avoid the general attention, which she was convinced that she excited. When she spoke, she imagined that her voice

penetrated every heart with an emotion that it was impossible to resist; and if, from imprudence or forgetfulness, she cast a glance upon any one, she was fully assured, if it was a man, that he was struck with admiration, and if a woman, with envy. All her motions were studied; her walk was stately; and on seeing her, it might have been supposed that some goddess forgetting her rank had mixed amongst common mortals; while the various perfumes with which she was always scented indicated her approach, in like manner as the presence of the queen of love in the bowers of Paphos was announced by the ambrosia which she cast around.

This was by no means the case with her younger sister, Maria. Far from estimating herself above her real value, such was her modesty, and so totally free was her mind from any tendency to vanity, or self-love, that she was rather disposed not sufficiently to appreciate the qualities either of her person or mind. By no means so handsome as Adelaide, she thought it very natural that her sister should be preferred to her, and even that, when they were together, she should herself be wholly overlooked. Yet her eye, though not so fine as Adelaide's, was more expressive; though her air was less imposing, it was more easy: in a word, the eldest when she appeared seemed to claim admiration; the youngest seemed as if she could have said, "Do not pay any attention to me, I am not worth so much trouble."

A contrast so remarkable could not escape the observation of those who frequented the society of Monsieur Dumont ; but it produced an effect upon them very different from what the two sisters imagined. Nobody loved Adelaide ; every body loved Maria : and notwithstanding that the former had really a good heart, such was her ridiculous arrogance, that it threw a complete veil over her merits ; while at the same time it made the amiable simplicity of Maria appear in so advantageous a point of view, that she was universally admired, while Adelaide herself was scarcely noticed.

Yet the vanity of Adelaide, invariably mistaking the sentiments she inspired, saw only in this indifference the effects of a respectful awe, and emotions of surprise, at the sight of so much beauty. “Do you observe,” she would say to Maria, with the naïveté of self-importance, if that expression may be allowed, “when we are together, with what familiarity you are received, and with what dignity I am treated ? There is not a man young or old, conceited or modest, who is not thrown into ecstasies, who does not appear altogether confounded with astonishment and admiration, only by a look from me.”—“That is very true,” Maria would reply with genuine naïveté.—“If the sight of me alone produces such an effect, how much more powerful is the impression when I speak ! They look at me, they endeavour to answer, but in vain ; their faltering voices expire upon their lips, they are un-

able to utter a word.”—“Yes, indeed, I have often seen people cast a look upon you, and retire without speaking; but, my dear Adelaide, will you not concur with me in thinking, that even the great advantages derived from beauty are at such a price bought rather too dear?”—“How can that be?”—“It must surely be very disagreeable to produce such an effect upon people that they cannot come near one.”—“I half agree with you; and for this reason the universal empire that I involuntarily exercise, sometimes gives me a degree of concern. But, is there any gratification which can be compared with being able to say, I appear, and every body is struck mute with admiration and astonishment?”—“Indeed, I must confess that I had much rather they should speak, and expect an answer from me;—that they should have their senses enough about them to support an agreeable conversation. I have often observed, while you were grave and silent in the midst of your admirers, and I was talking and laughing with them, that your fine eyes were expressive only of listlessness and weariness, that you seemed absolutely overwhelmed with lassitude.”—“That is to say, my poor Maria, that I keep up my dignity, and that you let yourself down.”—“Oh, pray keep up your dignity as much as you please. I amuse myself without finding any want of proper respect; and if this be letting myself down, I resign myself to it.”

These discussions, though often renewed be-

tween the sisters, never lessened the attachment that subsisted between them, nor altered the opinion that each entertained of the other. Adelaide considered Maria only as an ordinary being, who might indeed sometimes attract a momentary notice in company, from her ingenuous frankness and agreeable vivacity. Maria beheld in Adelaide a perfect beauty; a person of most extraordinary accomplishments, whose empire it was impossible to resist.

Several little circumstances contributed to strengthen these mutual opinions in the two sisters. Monsieur Dumont, always extremely occupied with his business, had little leisure to attend to the education of his daughters; he therefore placed them in a very good school for two years. Now, however, it was necessary that they should sometimes partake in the amusements which are so attractive to young people, and he carried them one evening to the Grand Opera. The entertainments of the evening happening to be particularly popular, the house was exceedingly full, and they were scarcely seated when the eyes of almost the whole company were fixed upon Adelaide. Maria perceiving this, could not forbear saying to her in a whisper, "Do you not perceive how much you are noticed? All the glasses are directed to you; and it is certainly no wonder, for I never saw you look more beautiful."—"Indeed, I think I do excite some sensation," replied Adelaide with a smile of self-approbation. While they were speaking, a young

man named Melcour, a relation of Monsieur Dumont's, of an agreeable person, and of such merit as to presage that he would one day rise to great distinction, came into the same box. He had for some time been observed to frequent the merchant's house with an assiduity which seemed to announce that it must have some particular meaning, and Adelaide did not entertain the least doubt but that she was the magnet which attracted him thither; while Maria, in the simplicity of her heart, delighted in the prospect of one day calling him her brother-in-law.

The Opera began. Two very pretty elegant young women came into the same box with Monsieur Dumont and his daughters. Adelaide had that day perfumed herself more than usual; she was so strongly scented with musk, that the smell of it, rendered more overpowering by the heat of the house, was wholly insupportable, especially to persons of delicate nerves. One of the ladies near her, after having with difficulty endured the musk for some time, was at last so much overcome by it, that she was obliged to leave the box. As she got up she said, "It is a torment that cannot be endured."—"What torment can she mean?" said Maria to her sister.—"It is not difficult to guess," replied Adelaide: "she came hither with the intention of attracting notice, and, seeing every eye fixed on me, while she was overlooked, could no longer endure such a *torment*."—"Yet, she is very pretty,"

observed Maria : “ but whoever would wish to shine, must not be seated near you.”—Monsieur Dumont, being himself accustomed to Adelaide’s perfumes, concluded that the lady’s going out was on account of sudden indisposition ; while Melcour, overhearing the conversation between the two sisters, whose characters he had thoroughly studied, could scarcely repress his laughter.

The place of the fugitives was soon filled by two gentlemen, one of whom was evidently a general officer, from the number of Orders with which he was decorated. He was no less annoyed by the musk than the lady whose place he occupied had been. He coughed, yawned, took snuff ; but in spite of his efforts to repress the effect it produced upon him, he was soon seized with a violent tremor, and went out abruptly, saying to the friend who was with him, “ Let us get away, I feel that it would be dangerous to me to remain here.”—“ Do you hear ?” said Adelaide to Maria : “ This accounts for the agitation the officer was in.”—“ Nothing resists your charms,” answered Maria ; “ you subdue even the favourites of Victory.”—Monsieur Dumont really believed that the officer meant to allude to the impression Adelaide’s beauty had made upon him, and Melcour, again, could hardly restrain his laughter.

But, to complete the joy and triumph of the arrogant fair one, a charming young man, apparently an invalid, who sat in the pit directly

under her, towards the middle of the performance was so overcome by the musk, that he fainted away upon the shoulder of the person who sat next to him. This created no small confusion; the young man was carried out of the house, but was so extremely ill that it was thought necessary to get advice for him, and an inquiry was made whether there might not be some medical person among the company who could come to his assistance. "Oh dear!" whispered Adelaide to her sister, "how sorry I am to have done this mischief! But why would he look at me so much?" This time Melcour endeavoured in vain to restrain his inclination to laugh; he was forced to give way to it, and laughed very heartily.

Some time after, Monsieur Dumont took his daughters to the Comic Opera. A favourite actor was to perform in two of the pieces; for which reason the house was so much crowded, that they could get no places but in the balcony box upon the stage. As this box is very conspicuous, Adelaide, seated in the front of it, was delighted at so excellent an opportunity of showing herself; and, in the excess of her arrogance, she immediately felt assured that she should make no less havoc here than at the Grand Opera. But as she was now perfumed only with scents that were mild and not overpowering, neither the women who were near her, nor the young men who surrounded her, evinced the strong sensations that she expected. She only perceived that they looked

at her with some eagerness; but there was no suffocation, no attack upon the nerves; no appearance of envy and jealousy: she could not therefore forbear saying to Maria, with evident pique, "Surely I do not look so well as usual to-day!"—"Oh, indeed," said Maria, "I think, quite as well."—"Yet people are more attentive to the performance than to me. Is there any thing amiss in my dress?"—"Nothing, I can assure you."—"That is some satisfaction, however."

When our arrogant fair one could not find in one way the aliment necessary to her vanity, she seldom failed to seek it in another. Excessively mortified at producing so little effect upon the spectators, she sought and found her relief among the performers, in an event not uncommon to those whose memories are loaded with a great variety of characters. The actor, who was justly celebrated as one of the first ornaments of the Comic Opera, was playing a favourite character in which he was considered as inimitable; when, by some unaccountable chance, he was so much out in his part, that the audience were at a loss to imagine what could be the matter. "I much fear that I am the cause of this," said Adelaide to her sister: "have you observed how constantly his eyes have been turned towards me?"—"Yes," answered Maria, "and just at the moment that he began to hesitate."—"It is on my account, I have no doubt: give me your veil, I have not my own, I did not indeed expect to

want it; give it me directly; if he sees me again he is lost." Adelaide now put on her veil, to the great surprise of the people around her, who could not conceive the reason of this sudden precaution; while the attention she thus excited was ascribed by her entirely to admiration, and gave her a satisfaction which she could not conceal. Monsieur Dumont, not less surprised than every body else, inquired of his daughter why she put on her veil, when people in general were overcome with the heat. "You shall know another time," said Adelaide; "I can only assure you that it is from prudence and necessity."—"Oh yes," added Maria, "if my sister did not take this precaution, you would not see the conclusion of the performance."—"I understand nothing of this mystery," replied Monsieur Dumont, "you will explain it to me afterwards."

Adelaide remained veiled to the end of the piece; and when the actor (who had perceived nothing of what had passed in the balcony) was withdrawn, she unveiled, saying to her sister, with the utmost commiseration, "In what a sad perplexity did I throw the poor man! I am really afraid that he will not be able to play in the second piece."—"I shall be terribly disappointed then," said Maria, "for I am told that it is his most capital performance." The curtain soon rose, and the deeply smitten actor appeared. Adelaide immediately resumed her veil, to the increased astonishment of the spectators; nor could they forbear expressing,

by significant looks and nods, the impression made upon them. Melcour, who was in the opposite balcony, was much amused with the scene, the true clue to which he alone was possessed of.

Adelaide continuing the use of perfumes more than ever, rendered herself so extremely remarkable, that she was pointed at wherever she came, and people shunned her as if she had been some noxious animal. But her arrogance, always ready to find motives flattering to herself in every occurrence, saw only in this manifest desire to avoid her the irresistible effect of her charms.

Melcour's visits to Monsieur Dumont's continuing with increased assiduity, a suspicion was naturally excited in the two sisters, that he must have particular views in them. "For some months past," said Maria, "he has followed us every where; he must certainly, my dear Adelaide, be among the number of your humble admirers."—"In that case I pity him," said Adelaide, "for I am far from being disposed to receive his homage. And though every time we are together I see him on the point of declaring his sentiments, I should not know how to answer him."—"I must say that I think you are very difficult. Melcour's manners are pleasing, uncommonly pleasing; he is very amiable, has good talents, and is in a situation which my father says must lead in time to some very honourable appointment."—"I allow all this; but if I were to show a pre-

ference for one man, what would become of the rest?"—"So on this consideration you will remain single?"—"Ah! my dear Maria, it would be cruel to make so many victims at one stroke."—"But, hitherto, not one of your admirers has ventured to declare himself."—"Not positively: but it is impossible to mistake their sentiments; and it really grieves me to think of the numbers who would be driven to despair by my marrying."

As the two sisters were engaged in this conversation, Melcour was announced. "O Heavens!" exclaimed Adelaide, "he is coming to make his declaration."—"Well, you must receive it with proper consideration for him."—"My dear cousin," said he, addressing himself to Adelaide, "can you pardon the motive of my visit? I know the subject to be delicate; but since I have the sanction of your excellent father, I have determined on venturing to speak."—"Oh! there can be no doubt," whispered Adelaide to Maria, who was sitting by her upon the sofa; "do not leave me, I entreat you!"—"I have hesitated for a long time," added Melcour, "from the fear of displeasing you, whether to inform you of what I wish to mention; but the regard I have for you..."—"Homage such as yours can never offend," answered Adelaide with great dignity, yet somewhat embarrassed.—"Perhaps, my fair cousin, you will think me obtrusive and indiscreet; but..."—"I am happy to see, Monsieur Melcour, that you feel the importance of what you

would say.”—“ To be brief, then, I come to acquaint you candidly, that notwithstanding all your charms and good qualities, which might in some measure at least disarm satire, you are unhappily a constant object of ridicule in all companies.”—“ How !” exclaimed Adelaide, confounded and changing her tone, “ pray explain yourself, sir.”—“ I was indeed apprehensive that I should displease you ; but I thought that, as a relation who has really a great regard for you, I ought to brave every thing to fulfil the most sacred of duties. What I allude to, is your extravagant use of perfumes. Those who would otherwise be happy to enjoy your society dread your approach, and shun you, to avoid the disagreeable effects they produce. Indeed, if I must own the whole truth, you are nick-named, throughout Paris, the beautiful Muscadina ; nay, I have sometimes even heard you called the perfumer’s shop.”—“ How, sir ?—I really cannot suppose that my perfumes have ever seriously incommoded any body.”—“ This is exactly what I have said in your defence. I always observed, that I was sure you had no idea how disagreeable they were. But indeed, not long ago, when you were at the Opera, two ladies and a general officer were all obliged to leave their places near you, on this account. Nay, a young man in the pit, just below you, who was not in good health, fainted away.”—“ Is it possible !”—“ Forgive me for destroying pleasing illusions ; but the musk you had about you

was, indeed, the sole occasion of the effects which you may be excused for attributing to another cause. You cannot imagine, indeed, the ridicule you excite whenever you appear. Let me entreat you to attribute this interference to its real motive, the tender regard that I have for you; and to believe that it has cost me not a little to hazard the offending one with whom I am already nearly connected, and wish to be connected still more nearly.”—“Indeed, my dear cousin, I shall certainly avail myself of the important advice you have given me, and believe me, that far from being offended. . . .” —“Offended!” interrupted Maria; “you must be very ungrateful indeed, if you were so. If my cousin had the kindness to tell me of my faults, I would soon correct them; but he has not so much regard for me as he has for you.”—Melcour only replied to this amiable ingenuousness, by a look which expressed how much he admired it; and after receiving sincere thanks from the two sisters, he took his leave, making many acknowledgements to the one for the indulgence with which she had listened to him, and promising the other to tell her of her faults when he could discover that she had any.

Though Adelaide’s eyes were opened in one instance with respect to the errors into which her arrogance had led her, she was not disposed to abate it in any degree towards him who had done her this kind office. “He wishes to be more nearly connected with the family,” she

repeated with impatience. "Nothing can be clearer; he wishes to make me his wife, and would first correct my errors:—this, to be sure, is perfectly natural. What a pity that I can never feel any thing but indifference towards him! We may esteem our censors, but it is not easy to love them. This censor, however, shall find how I will lead him, with his notions of improving and rendering me perfect."

A short time after, as Monsieur Dumont was sitting at breakfast with his two daughters, he informed them that Melcour, having expressed an eager wish of becoming his son-in-law, was to come that morning to make his proposals in due form. "My dear Adelaide," he added, "you will then not hesitate to make yourself and him happy. I think I hear him coming at this moment."—"Oh! my father, I feel myself so agitated—allow me to retire for a moment. Maria will take my place. You know my sentiments, sister," she continued, taking Maria apart as she went out: "speak for me, I entreat, and soothe the despair that my refusal will occasion poor Melcour."

On the latter's appearance, Maria began to make excuses for the absence of Adelaide. "My sister," she said, "is so much agitated!—She has a high esteem for you, and is truly grateful for the friendship you have shown her, so that it costs her more than I can express.... In short, she has charged me to receive your declaration, and to answer for her."—"She could not have done better, amiable Maria,"

answered Melcour, "since it is to you I am come to address my vows,—since it is you I wish to ask of your excellent father."—"Me!" she exclaimed with a faltering voice, and blushing with confusion and modesty, "are you indeed aware of what you say?"—"How!" said the astonished father, "it is not Adelaide whom you demand as a wife!"—"I did not indeed mention," said Melcour, "to which of my cousins my heart was devoted, but I thought that it must long ago have plainly appeared."—"Well, Maria," said her father, "answer for yourself."—"I shall not take long to consider," answered Maria, "if it be indeed me whom Mr. Melcour means to ask in marriage—yet—I scarcely know how to believe that he is not joking with me."—"I joke with you, dearest Maria! You have given me leave to correct your faults, and I promised to do so when I could perceive any. I am now made sensible of one, which I must indeed desire to mention very seriously."—"Oh, tell it me, I entreat, and it shall be corrected without delay."—"It is, that you do not know how to appreciate justly your own value. I have studied your character for a long time, I have followed you every where, I have listened eagerly to every word that dropped from your lips, and never, no never did I find a more amiable disposition, or manners more captivating. Yes, charming girl, you will, I am confident, make one of the best of wives, and I swear at your feet to make you, as far as lies in my power,

one of the happiest.”—“ Indeed,” said Maria, hesitating and blushing, as she gave her hand to Melcour, “ since your choice has been fixed upon me If it had been my sister to whom your proposals were addressed, I was charged to give you her refusal.”—“ To refuse Melcour !” interrupted Dumont. “ Yes, my father, I was ordered to refuse him, since she could not support the idea of driving so many victims to despair.”—“ Adelaide ! Adelaide ! come forth !” cried her father smiling, “ you may venture to show yourself ; your victims are all safe.”—“ Believe me, Monsieur de Melcour,” said Adelaide as she returned into the room, “ that the painful refusal, sent through my sister . . .” —“ What do you say, my fair cousin ? She has, on the contrary, crowned my wishes with success.”—“ O Heavens !” said Adelaide, “ I entreated you, Maria, to refuse him . . .” —“ For you,” interrupted Maria, “ but not for myself.”—“ Ha ! ha ! ha !” said Dumont, laughing aloud, “ this is excellent. My dear child, we have been deceived ; it is your sister whose hand is solicited by her cousin. You must make the best of it, and cheerfully give up your right of eldership . . .” —“ As I do, without any sacrifice,” said Adelaide, “ since it assures Maria’s happiness.”—“ I expected no less of you,” replied Melcour, “ and I experience by anticipation a great pleasure in calling you by the endearing name of sister. As every thing seems to favour my wishes, may I venture to entreat you to perfect them, by accelerating

the happiest day of my life? I am not certain from one day to another, that the duties of the appointment I am just honoured with may not oblige me to be absent for some time; and if I must be separated from my dear Maria, I would at least bear with me the title of her husband.”—“Separated!” said Maria, “Oh! no! will it not then be my duty to follow you?”—“Well,” said Monsieur Dumont, “her fortune is ready; nor do I know of any obstacle to the wedding taking place the very next week, if that will suit Monsieur Melcour.”—“It is sooner than I dared to hope for. But, my dear Maria, if this delay . . .”—“I tremble lest the order should be given for your departure.”—“Suppose we fix Thursday then, my dear son-in-law! we shall have time enough to make the necessary preparations. Believe me, it will not be one of the least happy days of my life.”

On the day when the ceremony took place, Monsieur Dumont’s house was an entire scene of festivity and rejoicings. The wedding was splendid, and attended by all the relations and numerous friends of both parties. Maria appeared more amiable and interesting than ever, and was the object of universal admiration and commendation. Adelaide had too much real goodness to feel envious of her sister’s happiness; but she could not refrain from giving way to her habitual arrogance, and persuaded herself that the polite attentions paid to her as the bride’s sister were a fresh proof of the empire

she supposed herself to exercise over all hearts. This illusion increased during the ball with which the day concluded. All the young men of Monsieur Dumont's acquaintance were assembled there. Many of them who had been already amused with the ridiculous pretensions of Adelaide, remarked, in a corner where they were talking together, the attitude of the arrogant fair one, who with her eyes cast down, and scarcely answering any body, in some sort condemned herself to motionless silence, from pure compassion to those around her, and pleased nobody from the fear of pleasing every body.

When the ball began, and Adelaide joined the dance, she observed that her partner never took her hand. This singularity, which would have offended any body else, surprised her at first; but the next moment she attributed it to prudence, and the fear of touching a hand which he never could hope to obtain. Her second partner, one of the best dancers in Paris, surprised her still more; he was agitated, forgot his steps, could not keep time, and was himself in such confusion that he confused the whole dance. "What is the matter with you, Charles?" said Melcour.—"Nothing," he answered, sighing deeply.—"Another victim," thought Adelaide: "if this continues, I shall be obliged to give up dancing."—At last the young man on her right hand was obliged to take her hand in making a chain. He stopped suddenly; his countenance changed; and he

got one of his friends to finish the dance. "Are you ill, Mr. Gercour?" asked Maria immediately:—"It is nothing, madam, nothing; but I felt all at once such a swimming in my head: it begins now to go off."—Adelaide, convinced that she was the sole cause of his being so much affected, was sincerely unhappy at seeing the power of her charms. The good Maria was of the same opinion as her sister; but Melcour, from certain signs which he observed passing among the dancers, was inclined to believe that they were amusing themselves at the expense of his sister-in-law.

When the dance was over, Adelaide came and sat down by the bride, and expressed her concern at producing such an effect on all who approached her. "Monsieur Charles," she said, "one of the best dancers, could not make a single step, because he was dancing with me. Dorsan was afraid to take my hand; and the unhappy Gercour was so agitated that he was unable to finish the dance. I perceive I must give up dancing, though I love it to distraction."—"Well now," answered Maria, "have not I said truly, that one may pay too dearly for the advantage of being handsome?"—"Indeed there are moments," replied her sister, "when I am almost tempted to think so."

While this conversation was passing between the sisters, the band began to play a waltz, and a fourth young man came and asked Adelaide to dance with him. She refused from com-

passion: he insisted. She then accepted his hand, and they began dancing; but soon, as if struck by a sudden convulsion, he left the dance, and fell upon a sofa, complaining of a palpitation at the heart which almost deprived him of the power of breathing. Every body ran to his assistance, while Adelaide said to her sister, "You see, nobody can resist me. It cannot be said now that this confusion is occasioned by my perfumes, as I have not used any since the admonition I received from your husband."

Several days after, Madame Melcour, tired of the large parties and tedious dinners that ensued from her marriage, proposed one morning to her husband and father, that they should all make a party together to breakfast at St. Cloud. "I love," she said, "those little bowers at the entrance of the park, and the breakfasts there are excellent." Her proposal met with a ready assent from Monsieur Dumont, Monsieur Melcour, and Adelaide; and they all repaired to this celebrated seat of royalty, and took their place as they had planned in one of the bowers. Adelaide, who had no apprehensions in this party of making new victims, laid aside her usual arrogance, and was very animated and agreeable. In the midst of the breakfast, they heard the voices of a party of young men in the adjoining bower, whom they soon recognised as some of those that had been present at the ball given on the marriage

of Maria with Melcour. "I was confident," said Gercour, "that I should win my wager; that we could prevent her dancing."—"This lovely Adelaide," said Charles, "how much is the public amused at her expense!"—"She imagines," said Dorsan in his turn, laughing aloud, "that she cannot honour any one with a look, but his heart is immediately set on fire."—"One cannot speak to her," said another, "but she instantly presumes that she is about to receive a declaration of love."—"I think I played the palpitations very well," said the waltz dancer."—"And I," said Dorsan, "the not daring to touch even the tip of her finger." Thus, in turn, they all recounted their exploits; while a new voice said, "Indeed you all played your parts to admiration, and we willingly pay our wager."—"The lovely creature," added Dorsan, "supposes us sighing, crying, and dying for love of her, while the wine of Burgundy and the excellent fare of St. Cloud revenge us for her rigours...."—"To the health of the arrogant fair!" they all exclaimed at once: "may she long be the occasion of merry meetings like the present!"

"The rascals!" said Dumont, "how they are amusing themselves at your expense, Adelaide!"—"They are a parcel of rattling young men," replied Melcour, "whom we must excuse; they do not know that we are so near. I will go and put a stop to their facetiousness."—"By no means," said Adelaide, stopping him: "they do me a greater service than they

have any idea of. I begin to be fully sensible of my own absurdity. When one has given occasion to such severe animadversions, one must have the courage to support them. Do not interrupt the gentlemen, I entreat."

"Yet it must be confessed," said Charles, "that notwithstanding her absurd arrogance she has many amiable qualities. If she were a coquet, I would not defend her; but you must confess with me, that it is owing to the goodness of her heart, yes, the goodness of it, that we have won our wager. It was the fear of increasing our sufferings that deprived her of the pleasure of dancing, and prevented her speaking to us, or looking at us."—"She is certainly," added Gercour, "of an amiable disposition, and how is it possible that she should not be blind on this subject? She has been accustomed from her infancy to hear her beauty extolled. She lost her mother early, and has had only her father to direct her, who, estimable as he is, could supply the loss but imperfectly, occupied as he has always been with business, which precluded his paying the requisite attention to his daughters."—"That is very true," observed Monsieur Dumont.—"And Madame Melcour," continued Dorsan, "the most amiable little woman in the world, has been so much dazzled by the beauty and merits of her sister, that she was always flattering her, and leading her astray."—"Do you hear, Maria?" said Adelaide to her sister, with an impressive tone, and kindly taking her hand.

—“Oh,” rejoined Charles, “if some one could but open her eyes, and make her sensible of the ridicule she incurs, I am sure she would soon become an unassuming excellent woman, and then our sincere homage would supersede the sport we now make of her. I own indeed that even now I am sometimes ready to reproach myself upon this account.”

“I shall profit by this lesson,” said Adelaide to her father, “and feel grateful to the accident which has at length opened my eyes. Let us retire softly, and leave these young men to enjoy themselves. . . . I shall never forget,” she added emphatically, “that Charles undertook my defence, and I shall thank him for it when we next meet.”

Some days after, Charles came to call on the bride and bridegroom, when he was surprised at observing a remarkable change in the appearance of Adelaide. She was now dressed with great simplicity and modesty, in a style the very reverse of what he had been accustomed to see. “It is your own work,” she said, perceiving him examine her attentively, and speaking in a manner which surprised him no less than her appearance. “My work, do you say!” he exclaimed with astonishment, “I do not understand you.”—“Learn then,” said Melcour, “that we by accident overheard your conversation the other morning in the bowers of St. Cloud”—“Can it be? Ah, lovely Adelaide! how culpable must I then appear in your eyes!” . . . —“On the contrary, you are the

object of my eternal gratitude.”—“ So much generosity confounds me ! You can then really pardon our thoughtless indiscretion ? ”—“ Certainly,” said Monsieur Dumont, “ you entertained yourselves very freely at her expense.”—“ There was nevertheless one,” said Adelaide, “ who had the kindness and the candour to undertake my defence. He even avowed that he felt regret at having shared in the jokes which flew about :—they were severe, I must own, yet to them I am indebted for my present happiness. Oh ! how can I ever acquit myself towards him ? ”—“ By indulging him in the hope of one day obtaining the hand of her whom he dared to defend, and who becomes from this moment in his eyes the most perfect of women ! ”—“ If you had not corrected my arrogance, I might perhaps believe you ; but let us wait till time and reflection have made me deserving of your good opinion.”—“ Deserving of it ! ” exclaimed Charles eagerly : “ if this be the only objection, there can be no reason for my happiness being delayed.”—“ You are right,” said Monsieur Dumont, overcome with joy ; “ your father and I have long wished this alliance, and shall be rejoiced to see it concluded immediately. Dear Adelaide, you will not long have yielded your right of eldership.”—“ I shall not then enjoy my present happiness alone,” said Maria ; and pressing Adelaide in her arms, she added, “ You see now, my dear sister, that it is possible sometimes even to love one’s CENSORS.”

THE NUNS OF THE ORDER OF CHARITY.

IF any thing can add to the lustre of high birth, or to the charms of beauty, it is that amiable sensibility which is extended to all who are unfortunate, which comforts and consoles them, and that not intermediately by the means of emissaries, who are too often unfaithful, but in seeking in its own person the abodes of misery, in encouraging the victims by the kind accents with which it addresses them, in gladdening their hearts by its animating presence.

Such is a young princess, whom admiration will point out, whom gratitude will bless ; but whom respect forbids me to name in this place. Beautiful, and full of grace and elegance, she would have been remarked for these qualities had her lot been cast in ever so obscure a situation ; in that wherein she is placed she is emulous to show herself worthy of her exalted station ; and, feeling that virtue alone could give any superiority above that of rank, has sought to raise herself still higher by her virtue. Yet it is accompanied by so much modesty, and presents itself under such a variety of amiable forms, that even the respect due to the princess is often confounded with the tender interest felt for the most excellent of women. If in the evening her palace is the resort of the great, of those who are the most distinguished

for rank and talents; in the morning it is the asylum of all who have any favour to ask, whether the question be of a family which is in want of support, of one who has some equitable cause in suspense, without the means of defending it, or who has a benevolent plan of any kind to propose.

While a crowd of courtiers attend in the vestibule the moment for an audience which they ardently desire, her highness, in the remotest chambers of her apartment, is occupied in giving audience to those who are employed in administering her benevolence. To one she remits a sum which is to save a tradesman, the father of a numerous family, from a suspension of payment which would hazard the entire loss of his credit; another is commissioned to administer to an old man, once opulent, but whom the extravagance of his children has reduced to distress; a third receives orders to hasten to a respectable mother, living in the environs of Paris, who has two sons, officers in the life-guards, to tell her of a battle in which they have been engaged, and from which both have escaped without injury, after giving various distinguished proofs of their resolution and courage; another receives the brevet of a place which she has obtained for him, she alone having discerned his real merits through the unassuming modesty with which they were veiled: another is charged with carrying a pardon to an innocent man whom imposture had accused, and who had been condemned through igno-

ance and prejudice ;—to all a general order is given to attend diligently that in the court or at the gate of her palace, in the street, nay if possible in the quarter of the town where she resides, no one may be seen reduced to ask alms.

Having expedited in this manner all who are employed in such of her acts of beneficence as are publicly known, she then listens in private, and with still greater delight, to the agent intrusted with her secret charities. It is not any of the officers of her household whom she has chosen to exercise this important function, sooner or later they might be known, and her satisfaction in the good works would then be inconceivably diminished. This confidential agent is one of those sisters whose true piety, whose indefatigable zeal, and affecting humility contribute so essentially to the consolation of suffering humanity, to the preservation of useful artisans, to the education of their children, to those good works of every kind which are so imperiously called for in a large and populous city. In one word, it is a *Nun of the Order of Charity* whom the princess has made the associate of her private donations ;—it is to sister Agnes, whose intelligence and zeal in the performance of her task are to be exceeded only by her devotion to the Fountain of all goodness, that she confides what is above all things dear to her heart, the happiness of conferring favours without the source whence they are derived being known. She has access to the

princess at all hours, has free ingress and egress to and from the palace without any questions ever being asked, and every body belonging to it is eager to show her the utmost respect and regard. She traverses every apartment alone and unattended till she meets with her whom she seeks, when she is received by her as a cherished friend who is conferring important favours upon her, not as one who is only the minister of her own bounties.

Other persons when receiving their orders from the princess attend her standing; but sister Agnes is allowed to sit in her presence with the familiarity of an equal, while she gives a minute relation of all that she has done, of her walks to the remotest parts of the town, of the sick whom she has attended, the prayers she has offered up, the advice she has given, the alms she has bestowed. "Oh what patience! what piety!" exclaims the Princess, pressing her hands: "ye worthy servants of that religion of which you are a principal support, ye modest ornaments of our sex, what claims have you on the gratitude of your fellow-creatures! Every step you take is marked by some act of beneficence, your presence soothes the bed of affliction, at sight of you the poor seem to lose the sense of their sufferings, the old man is revived, the widow is consoled, the orphan finds his lost parent restored."

"Ah!" replies sister Agnes, with tears starting into her eyes, "I am but too happy to be made the minister of your highness's boun-

ties. If you condescend to consider us as of some use in the world, and as worthy of esteem, in your august person I seem to behold an angel descended from Heaven, who has been made to take the form of a lovely princess, only to be a more conspicuous model of every virtue.”—“Tell me, sister Agnes, have you large demands upon me to-day?”—“Oh no, madam, I have as yet expended little more than half the sum you last confided to me.”—“You have not I hope been sparing in your charities?”—“Indeed I have rather been lavish: I have paid the last six months due for the apprenticeship of that lovely young orphan whom I placed under your highness’s sempstress; she is most diligent at her business, and Heaven I am sure, blessing your goodness, will make her a pattern to young women in her situation: she never ceases importuning me to know the name of her unseen benefactress.—Then I gave ten pounds for a quarter’s payment of the board and lodging of that worthy old sculptor whom we have taken under our protection: he asked a thousand questions as usual, and could with difficulty be persuaded to take the money. ‘I have told you, sister Agnes, that I will no longer accept your bounty.’—‘And how then will you live?’—‘By my own industry.’—‘At seventy-five years of age? Impossible.’—‘Tell me only to whom I am indebted?’—‘It cannot be.’—‘Take back your money then.’—‘Not I, indeed,’ and throwing down the purse, I hastened away. Oh, these

artists are so proud! This good man once enjoyed a high reputation in the world, and richly deserved it, but misfortunes and the jealousy of rivals...."—“Well, sister Agnes, you must manage his delicacy as well as the circumstances will permit; it is not enough to be ready to give, some address is often requisite to make our bounties accepted.”—“Oh, as to that, I have made a friend of his worthy house-keeper, and she promises me that he shall never want.”—“But this was not all, good Agnes?”—“Alas, no!—twenty-five pounds went at one stroke to save the most interesting young man!”—“How?”—“Passing the other evening near a gaming-house, I heard a plaintive voice exclaim, murmuring to itself, ‘Wretch that I am! I have lost, at once, my honour and my father’s confidence, can I survive?’—He seemed about to fly, but I seized him by the arm, and said, ‘Whither would you suffer your despair to carry you?—You spoke of a father, ’tis in his name that I question you, then answer me!—You have, it should seem lost a sum of money.’ ‘Which was my father’s!—I had received twenty-five pounds for him—and a dreadful fatality . . .’—‘Take this purse, it contains that sum.’—‘How! can one of your order . . .’—‘The gift is not mine, it comes from the most generous of mortals,—a tutelary angel, of whom I am only the humble emissary.’—‘Oh tell this mortal, whether man or woman, that by this act my honour and my life are saved, and that my

eternal gratitude . . .’—He could say no more, he pressed my hand and departed. I am much deceived if we have not snatched from the brink of a dreadful precipice, one who till that fatal moment had been a stranger to guilt, and to whom the anguish he endured will prove an awful lesson against such a lapse in future. It has cost us indeed twenty-five pounds at one stroke.”—“But never, Agnes, could they have been better bestowed. Oh, do not on like occasions think of sparing!—The delight I feel at the thought of having perhaps saved from destruction one who may prove an ornament to society, is cheaply purchased by such a sacrifice. My jewels may be less splendid, my equipages may be more simple, my gardens may be less ornamented with statues...” —“But your own statue will one day be erected as the monument of a nation’s gratitude.” In conversations such as these was the time passed that this charitable sister daily spent with her amiable mistress.

One day this princess, who is a great patroness of the arts, was to honour with her presence a concert given by the Academy of Music, and from the excellent selection made, and the splendid talents of the performers, the highest expectations were formed of the entertainments; a great crowd of company was consequently expected. The Princess, whose palace was at a considerable distance from the Academy, set out rather later than she had intended, and afraid of making the company

wait, the coachman had orders to drive pretty fast. In his zeal to comply with his mistress, he drove with the rapidity of lightning; when in turning the corner of a street, one of the wheels ran against a porter who was carrying an enormous trunk upon his shoulder, and knocking him down his arm was dreadfully hurt. The cries of the poor man, and of the people by whom he was immediately surrounded, did not stop the coachman; he thought that by redoubling his speed he should prevent any knowledge of the accident reaching the Princess: but she, whose ears were ever sensibly alive to the calls of humanity, immediately heard the cries, and stopped the carriage to inquire the cause of them. On learning what had happened, she ordered her servants to hire a coach and carry home the unfortunate man, and to call the nearest surgeon immediately to his assistance: at the same time she reprimanded her coachman severely for his inattention.

Though the music was particularly fine, the princess was unable to enjoy it; she could think of nothing the whole evening but the poor wounded porter. As soon as those among her attendants who had accompanied him home returned, she inquired with the most amiable interest concerning his situation, the place of his abode, the number of his children, and above all the character he bore in the neighbourhood. She learnt that his name was Mitchell, that he had five children, all young, who depended for their subsistence entirely

upon his labour, and that he bore a most excellent character.

As soon as she returned home after the concert, she sent one of the officers of her household to assure him of her great concern for the accident, and to remit him a sum of money to maintain himself and his family during the time that he should be disabled. This officer was accompanied by the Princess's own surgeon, who examined the poor man's wounds and dressed them. He afterwards assured the Princess that there was no reason for alarm upon his account; no bone was fractured, there was only a slight laceration in the arm, which would be well in a week.

As this amiable woman, however, knew by experience that people are always too ready to flatter the Great, and conceal from them whatever might give them uneasiness, she was not entirely satisfied, and resolved to take other means of inquiring into the man's real situation. For this purpose she had recourse to sister Agnes. She charged her to go herself and see the sufferer, and bring her a faithful account of him, inculcating strongly upon her not to disguise the truth, how painful soever it might be. "If," said she, "my good Agnes, I place my highest enjoyment in administering to the comfort and happiness of my fellow-creatures who are in indigence, judge how great must be the interest I take in the case of this worthy father of a family, who owes to me his misfortune and his sufferings."—"Depend

upon my care and zeal, madam ; tomorrow morning I will have the honour of communicating to you the result of my visit."

The next morning she came accordingly at the usual hour ; but far from giving the Princess the same flattering account that she had received from the surgeon, she said she was afraid the latter had dried up the wound too hastily, and perhaps, in consequence, fixed a disease upon the patient which would not easily be cured. "I am neither a physician nor a surgeon," said she, "from study and regular education ; but the experience of forty-five years, passed in attendance upon the sick, supplies in great measure the place of such knowledge, and I am seldom mistaken in my opinion. Far from thinking the poor man's cure complete, I am very apprehensive that he may yet be confined several weeks : to use a common saying, they appear to me to have shut up the wolf in the sheep fold."

Sister Agnes was very right in her judgment. Mitchell's wound in a few days broke out again, and with such alarming symptoms, that a mortification was apprehended ; so that the surgeon said, the only chance of saving him was by taking off the arm. "Rather let me die," said the sufferer. "How is my family to be maintained if I am disabled, and become a burden upon them, instead of contributing to their support ? It may be that the good Princess, who has already done so much for us, would not suffer us to starve ; but it is

very hard for a man to be obliged to live himself, and see his family live on charity, when he is of an age and constitution to support them by his own labour.”—“ You are in the right, good Mitchell,” said sister Agnes : “ Cut off your arm !—These gentlemen think nothing of cutting off an arm : Amputation, amputation, is the word with them. I will maintain, however, spite of them all, that ’tis very possible to cure the wound without it, only by a little patience and courage ; for the case must be a long one, and the longer, because they wanted at first to shorten it too much. But if you dare trust yourself to me entirely, I have a balsam which I have tried thousands of times, and saved by it already many an arm, and a leg too.” The poor porter, overjoyed at hearing that his arm might be saved, resigned himself entirely to the care of the benevolent sister, and her balsam was immediately applied to the wound. “ I will come ten times a day if it be necessary,” said she, “ but you must second me by exerting all your patience and courage, and not fretting yourself.”—“ Oh, for that,” he answered, “ do not fear me ; and if it must be a long time before I am well, God’s will be done !”

For a fortnight, during which Agnes was unwearied in her attendance at Mitchell’s house, she never failed to go every morning and give an account of her patient’s situation to the Princess ; she however anxiously concealed from her that amputation of the arm had ever

been proposed, as she knew that this would have given her inexpressible concern. Her highness's surgeon, too, who had pronounced on the first inspection of the wound that it would soon be cured, and who had consequently never thought it necessary to repeat his visit to the sufferer, was equally ignorant of what had passed, consequently was in no danger of betraying what Agnes had kept secret with so much caution. Indeed, had he been better informed, he would scarcely have communicated a circumstance which must so materially have impeached his own skill.

It was not then till all apprehension for the safety either of the poor man's life or limb was at an end, that Agnes ventured to inform her benevolent patroness of all that had passed. The emotions evinced by the Princess at the relation, convinced the sister that she had judged very rightly in not making her communication earlier. "Oh, indeed," she said, "I cannot say how much I am indebted to your judgement and discretion. If the carelessness of my coachman had cost this poor man a limb, I should never have forgiven myself. I might have indemnified him and his family as far as money can go, but, as he said himself, he must have been for ever deprived of the delightful feeling that they owed their subsistence to himself alone. Indeed I admire the pride shown by him in this respect; it gives me the highest opinion both of his heart and mind."—Then pausing, and reflecting for a few mo-

ments, she proceeded: "Sister Agnes, do you not sometimes in your rounds carry with you some of your young novices, that they may be instructed in the secrets of your respectable order?"—"Most certainly, madam. The life we lead is so harassing that we soon grow old, and it is necessary that we should always have young people in training to succeed us."—"The next time you come here, then, bring one with you, I would study her dress, her manners, her language."—"Would your highness," said Agnes smiling, "enter yourself as a novice in the *Order of Charity*?"—"I have my projects," answered the Princess. "But above all things let her be about my age and stature."—"Well then, tomorrow one whom I have in my eye shall accompany me; but she is very diffident, and will be much in awe before your highness. I will, however, endeavour to inspire her with confidence."

On the morrow, at ten o'clock, sister Agnes returned with the novice. Her timid and modest appearance excited the most lively interest in the Princess, while her downcast eyes and hesitating steps showed how much she was inspired with awe at finding herself in the presence of so exalted a personage. But the Princess no sooner spoke, than the mild accents of her voice and the charm of her manners removed all apprehensions, and inspired her with confidence; nor did she regard her any longer but as a tutelary angel, whose highest enjoyment was to succour the unfortunate.

While the Princess was conversing with Agnes, she did not cease to examine the young novice, studying attentively her air, her manner, her demeanour, her mode of speaking; and at length, taking the sister apart, she said to her in a whisper: "At what time, Agnes, do you visit your patient tomorrow morning?"—"At eight o'clock," replied Agnes.—"Well then, come to my chamber at seven, I will give orders for your being admitted, and bring with you the habit of this interesting creature, complete in every part."—"Aha, I guess," exclaimed Agnes, and in her ecstasy she had nearly betrayed the whole secret to the novice; but a sign from the Princess commanded her to be silent, and to confine her transports to her own bosom, though she could not forbid their sparkling in her eyes, and being evinced by her gestures. "At seven," said the Princess, "and let the dress be complete." Agnes would not trust herself to answer; but kissing her mistress's hand eagerly, she retired with her young companion.

Orders were accordingly given by the Princess for Agnes to be admitted at the appointed hour in the morning; and the sister, punctual to the directions she had received, appeared at that hour, bringing the novice's habit. The Princess rose immediately, and desired Agnes to assist her in dressing. "Holy Virgin!" said the sister, as she proceeded in her task, "I guessed right, then, when I thought that your highness meant to accompany me in my visit to Mitchell."

—“It is very true,” said the Princess, imitating the tone and manner of the novice. “My taking the habit will not indeed be performed with the usual pomp and ceremony, but received from a hand such as yours, it will appear to me more sacred than if assumed with much greater order and solemnity.”—“And will your highness really condescend so far as to visit the humble abode of a poor porter?”—“Condescend, good Agnes!—To endeavour to repair the ills of which we ourselves are, though undesignedly, the cause, is not a condescension, but a duty. The dangers which this excellent husband and father has run, and perhaps still runs, have long inspired me with an ardent wish to carry him myself assistance and consolation. I was only apprehensive lest my presence should excite emotions which would be injurious to him; I therefore thought of assuming this disguise, trusting that I might appear with safety under a form with which no other ideas are associated but those of kindness, of piety, and of benevolence. Alas! if all who have unfortunately been the means of carrying despair and anguish into the abodes of their fellow-creatures, would equally assume courage to witness the misery they have occasioned, we should see fewer selfish egotists among the rich, and more hope and consolation among the poor.”—“’Tis Heaven! yes, ’tis Heaven itself that speaks by your mouth,” said Agnes. “But tell me, Princess, how shall we quit the palace without your

being known?"—"I have taken care of that, my good mother. My attendants all know that you are here, and believe that you are to stay with me for a long time. The balcony of my dressing-room communicates with an arbour in the garden, in which is a door to the street; I have all the keys necessary, and we may go out that way entirely unperceived."

The Princess then took the arm of sister Agnes, and they set out together; but the novice, unused to walking in the streets, was in danger of slipping at every moment, and would hardly have arrived in safety if she had not been supported by so practised a guide. "We have forgotten one thing," said Agnes, as they proceeded: "As you are not to be known by these poor people, we must give you some name."—"Oh, give me any that you please."—"You shall then be called Saint-Ange, it is a name that well becomes one who is indeed an angel of goodness."—"Speak softly, Agnes, or we shall betray ourselves."

At length they arrived at the poor porter's abode; it was in a narrow street, and in the fifth story of the house. They ascended a steep and winding staircase, very different from the spacious ones to which the Princess was accustomed; when the door of the apartment being opened, she beheld the poor porter seated in an easy chair, his wife on a stool by him spinning, and his children all playing about him. "Ah, sister Agnes!" exclaimed the patient, "eight o'clock has just struck;

I was sure we should soon see you : but whom have you brought with you ? Many a pretty novice have I seen among you, but never one to equal her.”—“ Aye, aye, that is all very well ; but the question is not now whether our novices are pretty or not, but how your wound is going on ? ”—“ Oh, it gets on finely with your balsam. If it hadn't been for that, I should never have been able to work again, or have had an arm to press my poor children to my heart.”—“ It is certain, indeed,” said the Princess, with a voice which spoke the utmost sympathy and interest, “ that sister Agnes has performed many miraculous cures.”—“ Ah ! ” said the porter, “ what a sweet voice ! This young sister, to be sure, may ask any thing she pleases of Heaven ; it could never refuse her.”—“ If so,” said the Princess, raising her hands and eyes to heaven, “ I would above all things pray for your speedy cure. I would fain, indeed, endeavour by my cares to accelerate it ; but this is the first time that our good mother has indulged me with accompanying her in her visits to the sick. You must not, therefore, be surprised, my good friends, if I appear a little awkward ; it is not the wish to do all in my power that is wanting.”—“ Oh,” said Agnes eagerly, “ we have not many novices like sister Saint-Ange, and I prognosticate that in time her name will be blessed by more than one whom her goodness has relieved.”—“ Honest man,” said the Princess, “ support your hand on mine ; you will per-

mit it, my good mother.”—“ I do not know, my young sister ; as you are unaccustomed to the sight of a wound, I am almost afraid” —“ In our situation we must accustom ourselves to every thing ; and I hope, as it has pleased God to call me to it, he will assist me with his grace . . . Be not afraid ; support yourself upon me.”—“ Oh, what a fine skin, and what pretty little fingers !” said Mitchell.—“ Come,” said sister Agnes, “ let us take off the dressing. This is excellent ; the wound has made such a progress since yesterday, it will now very soon be healed.”—“ Ah !” said the Princess with transport, “ Heaven then has heard my prayer !” —“ Yes, yes,” said Mitchell ; “ I said he could not refuse you. So I hope I shall soon get to work again. To be sure, we don’t want for any thing ; that good Princess, who almost ran over me, has been so bountiful. When I get well, I shall go to her palace, and stand at the gate on purpose to have the pleasure of seeing her as she goes out ; and I shall say, though she won’t hear me, Please your highness, I am Mitchell, come to thank you for all the harm and all the good you have done me ; and I hope God will please to reward you and sister Agnes.”—“ Reward me !” said Agnes ; “ I have done nothing but my duty.”—“ But be sure,” said sister Saint-Ange, taking her hand, which she pressed to her heart, “ that the Princess will not be wanting in gratitude to you.”—“ And then,” said Mitchell, “ I shall try and see the coachman, and shake hands.

with him, and tell him his mistress has been so good that I can't for the life of me owe him a grudge; so, if he pleases, we'll take a bottle together; for sister Agnes has made me live upon water so long, that I want something to comfort me."

At this moment a knock was heard at the door upon the staircase, and at the same time a rough voice inquired, "Does not a porter, by name Mitchell, live here? I want to see him, I have something to say to him."—"Come in, sir, come in," said one of the children, opening the door.—"Heavens!" said the Princess, in a low voice, to sister Agnes, "it is my coachman."—"Let us stand aside," said Agnes, "and do you keep behind me."—"Good man," said the coachman, "you see one who is heartily grieved at the misfortune he occasioned you."—"Aha! what it was you that had almost run over me?"—"And sorry enough I have been about it. I should have come to see you long ago; but madam's surgeon, whom she sent to look after you, told me you were quite cured. However, as I was calling at a house close by here just now, they told me it was no such thing, and they did not know whether your arm must not be cut off; so, then, I could not be easy without coming to see whether it was true or not."—"That was kind, to be sure; but you need not grieve yourself about it now; for since sister Agnes has been so good as to give me her balsam, I am getting quite well."—"Sister Agnes!" said the coachman, looking at her earnestly: "Aha!

what the good lady that comes every day to our Princess? Well, to be sure, 'tis she herself. Heavens!" then he exclaimed, seeing his mistress, who was unable longer to conceal herself, "why surely 'tis the Princess!" and he started back almost stupefied with astonishment, scarcely knowing what he had said. "The Princess!" exclaimed Mitchell and his wife.

"Yes," said Agnes, coming forward, "it is in vain to attempt concealing it any longer; it is her highness whom you behold, your kind and generous benefactress, who has even condescended to accompany me herself to your abode, and assist in dressing your wound. Ah!" she continued, falling upon her knees before the Princess, "when I told you, as we were walking hither together through the streets, that you were an angel from heaven, I did not think I should so soon have been able to render you the homage so justly your due."—"Rise, my good mother," said the Princess; "it does not become either you or me to see you at my feet. Are we not sisters in this good work? And you too, my good friends, rise," she added, addressing Mitchell and his wife, who, following the example of Agnes, had also fallen at her feet, and were pouring out their hearts in expressions of gratitude and respect. "Heaven preserve your highness," said the good man, "for the sake of the poor and unfortunate!"—"I am so overcome with joy and gratitude," said the wife, "that I scarcely know how to speak."—"I shall never forget this as long as I live," said the coachman, "and shall

be more proud than ever of belonging to her highness.”—“Dermont,” said the Princess, “if indeed you feel any satisfaction at being in my service, be cautious, I charge you, to conceal from every one what you have now witnessed; at a single word which may betray it, you are discarded instantly.”—“Her highness may depend upon my discretion.”—“And you, my good friends,” she added, addressing Mitchell and his wife, “to you I recommend equal secrecy.”—“We promise your highness,” said the wife.—“For my part,” said Mitchell, “I do not know that I can promise any such thing; there is something so fine, so noble, that if I should ever chance in merry-making with my comrades to get a little wine into my head Besides, it can’t be spread too much among the people, who fancy that the Great never trouble their heads about any thing but themselves.”—“Well,” said the Princess, “but one thing remains to be said. When you are recovered, it must be my care to find employment for you and your family: you shall all come and live in my palace; you, good Mitchell, shall be my groom, your wife shall be my sempstress, and your children shall be provided for as they grow up. Agnes, let us return; never shall I forget this morning. I will preserve this dress with care as long as I live; I am more attached than ever to the NUNS OF THE ORDER OF CHARITY, since I have learned that half the charm of beneficence is lost, if not practised in our own persons.”

THE DANGERS OF A TURN FOR SATIRE.

THOSE malevolent minds who seem to delight only in sarcasm, who are perpetually saying mortifying things to others as it were instinctively, who do not scruple for the sake of a witticism to betray confidence, to violate friendship, to ridicule persons in power, or to insult persons of true merit, are characters but too frequently, alas! to be met with in society. The applause and laughter they excite, render them insensible to the murmurs of that self-love which they have wounded, and blind them to the vengeance which it meditates; in the gratification of the moment, they think not how dearly they may in the end be made to atone for their partial triumph, the detestable pleasure they feel in deteriorating the talents, and even attacking the honour of those who are not present to defend themselves. But above all, how contemptible is it to see these mighty satirists change all at once their manner and language, on the appearance of any one whom they have been satirizing, and, masking their ill-nature by smooth hypocrisy, endeavour to make them understand that it was not them of whom they had been speaking!

Eugenio united to some literary talents an animated countenance, and the exterior of a

gentleman; but these advantages were counteracted by a remarkable causticity of manner, by a peremptory tone, and by the most sardonic smile. He had a very retentive memory, which was loaded with those epigrams, puns, and witticisms, by which our language is now so much infested, and which daily deform and corrupt it. Born in an obscure station, but inspired with an insatiable ambition, he fancied that a competent degree of assurance and address were the only requisites to the attainment of fortune; that by speaking with arrogance upon all subjects, the multitude would be easily imposed upon, and made to believe him a person of superior merit; that by criticising without mercy the most valuable productions of others, he should be supposed capable of producing better himself; that by censuring indiscriminately the conduct of every body around him, he should establish his own character as irreproachable; in a word, that in humiliating others, by the force of ridicule and sarcasm, he should raise himself very far above them. Thus Eugenio became the dread of those literati and artists who submit the fruits of their labours to the public. There was no class of society, no new production, no individual distinguished by his merit, his rank, or his fortune, in whom he did not find some field for exercising his censorial talents, some ground on which he might make them the subject of an epigram or a sarcasm.

The success that he obtained in this way,

was more than once frustrated by the resentment of those on whom his satirical talents were exercised. He had received many lessons which ought to have made him more cautious; but the desire of passing for a wit, the pleasure of being listened to, and hearing his sayings repeated by others, and of taking the lead in conversation, were gratifications for which he willingly sacrificed his tranquillity, his fortune, and his prospects in life. He lampooned by turns his patrons, his friends, his relations. Nothing was sacred to him; and when he heard it observed, on his repeating an epigram, "Oh, he is a rogue," he believed himself of the highest order of geniuses, and his triumph was complete.

It will be easily supposed that this disposition prevented his advancement, and the acquisition of that fortune he was so ambitious to obtain. He followed by turns the profession of a preceptor, a public singer, and a writer in the public journals. The fancy then seized him to be an author; but several successive failures convinced him that it is generally easier to censure, than to surpass those who are censured. Defeated in these projects, he got employment from a printer, and chance threw in his way the correcting the proofs of a political work of some importance, by which he attracted the notice of the author, a minister of state; a man as much celebrated for his worth, as by the distinguished situation that he held. He perceived that Eugenio had talents, and pleased

with the ease of his manner and his readiness in conversation, he offered him employment in his office, a place at his table, and apartments in his house; engaging at the same time to make some future provision for him. The satirist, thus brought forward in the world, exercised more than ever his fatal talents, and endeavoured to render himself still more and more conspicuous, by the force of his satire. His first essays in this way being made on desultory subjects and unknown persons, the minister, who was no enemy to mirth within proper bounds, was only amused by them. But he soon remarked that nothing was sacred to Eugenio, nay, even perceived that he was himself in his turn made the subject of his railleries; and not much pleased with the discovery, intimated to him very seriously, that unless he would forfeit his favour for ever, he must be more circumspect; that a repetition of such conduct would end in losing him the protection of all those who were disposed to patronise him, and occasion his immediate dismissal from his present situation.

This advice, given with freedom and spirit, had the most salutary effect on the person to whom it was addressed. Eugenio was then about thirty-six years of age, and began to feel the necessity of making himself esteemed, and procuring an establishment that might give some consequence to his existence, and procure him in his old age the resources and consola-

tions necessary to that period. Making a great effort therefore, and arming himself with the resolution essential to the support of it, he renounced, though not without regret, the dangerous gratifications which he had derived from his talents for satire; and thus gradually losing the formidable character he had acquired, he found the number of his enemies diminish in proportion.

The minister, very much gratified with this change, felt his esteem for Eugenio daily increase, and with it the confidence he placed in him, so that he finished at length by making him his confidential secretary. In this honourable post, which gave him the power to do as much good as he had formerly done mischief, he proved to the world that self-love, and a desire of distinction, however disgusting when under no reasonable control, yet often conceal very estimable qualities; for he now lost no opportunity of doing all the good offices in his power. Convinced by experience, how much even the most trifling literary works cost to their authors, he gave his opinion on new productions with candour and indulgence, nor ever dwelt upon the subject but when he could applaud with justice: thus, from a venomous critic, he became one of the most candid and impartial of judges, and a faithful friend to real merit. Happier than he had ever yet been, he was now convinced that public esteem produces more lively and durable gratification,

than the false glitter which triumphs only for a moment, than the applause received from the general reputation of being a wit.

The friendship with which Eugenio was honoured by his patron, and the important services that he rendered him every day, procured him the means of obliging a worthy man, and saving him from the loss of his fortune and his honour. This person thought he could not better acquit himself of his obligation than by giving him the hand of his daughter, whose beauty and excellent qualities gave a fair prospect of a very happy union. Eugenio found his wife a model of virtue, and enjoyed with her the highest degree of domestic happiness: this was still further cemented after a time by the birth of a daughter, to whom was given the name of Julia.

The cares which the infancy of this darling child required, and afterwards the important duties attendant upon her education, at once occupied and delighted all the leisure moments of Eugenio. His tenderness for Julia was strengthened by seeing in her a living image of himself. She had his expressive features, his animated countenance, and his satirical smile: with these he was anxious to see her unite the sensibility, modesty, and angelic character of her mother; but here he experienced a cruel disappointment. The little Julia early displayed the caustic wit, and the cruel spirit of universal censure, by which he had himself been for so many years distinguished. In vain did

he endeavour to crush in the bud this fatal disposition, from which he had himself been so much a sufferer, and which he foresaw would be equally a source of suffering to his daughter: he saw with no small mortification, that his attention to this point was not crowned with success. The excellent education which he gave her, produced no effect upon this strong original feature in her character. It even seemed, as her mind became gradually more developed, that she only became more keenly satirical. Her excellent mother, whose mild and reserved manners formed so striking a contrast to those of her daughter, took every advantage of the attachment that subsisted between them, to try and wean her from so dangerous a disposition. But Julia even in embracing her, and lavishing upon her a thousand caresses, could not forbear exercising her unhappy talent; it could not be restrained even by the sacred character of a mother. The latter, too amiable herself to be aware of all the mischiefs of such a quality, would sometimes laugh at her daughter's sarcasms, regarding them as the thoughtless effusions of youth, and not doubting that they would be reformed as she grew older. But Eugenio, who knew so well the evils arising from a disposition to satire, and feared to see them accumulated one day on his dear Julia, heard her with still increasing concern, and viewed this misfortune as the just punishment of his own offences in the same way.

The minister to whom he was secretary be-

ing appointed ambassador to the court of Saxony, he announced to Eugenio that he might prepare to accompany him; he had found him, he said, so worthy of his confidence, and depended so much upon his zeal and discretion in the important concerns in which he would be employed, that he would not upon any account be deprived of his services. Eugenio was highly flattered by this mark of confidence from his patron, not only on account of the honourable testimony which it bore to his zeal and fidelity, but as leading the way to a fortune which might secure to his daughter an advantageous establishment. She, who had never been separated from her father, whom she adored, obtained permission to accompany him with her mother; and when they arrived at Dresden, apartments were assigned them under the same roof with the ambassador.

Julia in a country entirely new to her, among persons whose manners and language appeared strange, to one so little accustomed to the world, indulged more than ever in her turn for satire. Her father frequently remonstrated with her on the subject; representing that his situation ought to make her particularly circumspect in her conduct: he observed that the ladies among the German nobility, who traced their ancestors to remote periods, maintained a dignity which would never allow of her amusing herself at their expense; and nothing could be more dangerous than to at-

tempt it. But Julia, insensible to the importance of his advice, consulted only her own inclinations, and was constantly criticising the dress of the great ladies about the court, or ridiculing their stately and reserved deportment, their rigid adherence to etiquette, or the manner in which they prided themselves upon their descent from such a long line of noble ancestors. The gentlemen who heard her were at first entertained with the satirical vivacity of the pretty young French woman, and considered her only as an amiable rattle. They soon however altered their tone, and seriously recommended to her not to give way so much to the liveliness of her imagination, as it would perhaps lead to unpleasant consequences: above all things they counselled her to be particularly cautious not to wound the self-love of any one. Eugenio himself received the same advice on her account from his patron, who observed to him, that as he had been known at Paris by several Saxons as a man addicted to satire, the sarcasms of his daughter would not fail to be attributed to him; which might do him the greatest injury.

What had been foreseen by the ambassador was realised but too soon. Among the most distinguished women of the court was the Duchess de Clinancourt, a relation of the first minister's; she was about forty-four years of age, of a majestic figure, and still retained some traces of her former beauty. This lady having formerly resided some time at Paris,

the French ambassador had particular letters of introduction to her, and was received by her in the most gracious manner. In her visits at the ambassador's, she never took the slightest notice of Eugenio; and if in crossing the apartments she ever saw Julia and her mother, she only paid them the distant salutation of superiority, and always made them feel the distance by which she conceived herself separated from them. Nothing more was wanting to the young satirist to give her a decided aversion to the duchess, and to make that lady the object of her highest flights of ridicule. Learning that the duchess had formerly played a distinguished part at court, from the splendour of her beauty, as well as from her rank; but that she began now to find her influence diminish, and was only retained in her appointment at court out of respect to the memory of her husband, and her relationship to the first minister; she treasured up this information in her mind, resolved to make use of it upon the first occasion that was offered.

After a dinner of etiquette which the French ambassador gave to the lords and ladies of the court, he had a concert in the evening, consisting of a selection from some of the best French operas. Julia, who united an exquisite taste and brilliant execution to a very fine voice, sang from *Alceste* the beautiful air, "*No, it is not a sacrifice,*" in so masterly a manner, and with so much sensibility and expression, that the audience were in raptures.

The Duchess de Clinancourt, who had often observed the little respect shown her by Julia, was the only person who did not appear delighted ; she on the contrary affected a cold indifference, nay even to find fault with the performance. Julia, mortified to the quick, immediately took a resolution of revenging herself, and her ingenuity at witticisms soon furnished her with one which fully gratified her wishes. Surrounded by a great number of people, some of whom observed upon the excessive pride and ill-nature of the duchess, while they paid her the highest compliments, and expressed in very warm terms the pleasure they had received from hearing her : “ I am highly gratified,” she replied, “ by the honour you do me. It makes ample amends for not having been able to obtain the approbation of one person present, who even made no scruple of finding fault with me in my own hearing I see,” she added with a bitter smile, punning upon the name of the duchess, “ that it is difficult to please Madame *Décline-en-cour*.”—At this sally, which was uttered loud enough to be heard by the duchess, none of the fair satirist’s auditors could resist laughing heartily ; and the rest of the company inquiring what had amused them so much, the pun of Madame *Décline-en-cour* was whispered from one to another, till every one was in possession of it, and shared the general amusement. The next day it was even propagated in all the circles in Dresden ; and it soon be-

came so much the general appellation of the duchess, that she was scarcely called any thing else but Madame *Décline-en-cour*.

The vain and vindictive duchess, finding what had been said, quitted the ambassador's house in the utmost rage. She felt it so much the more cutting, as it applied at once both to her loss of power and of beauty; and she vowed vengeance on Eugenio and his daughter. Making use, therefore, of her influence over the first minister, the only power that she still retained, she acquainted him with the insult she had received, and demanded that he should do her justice.

A few days after the French ambassador, ignorant of what had passed at his house, appeared at court; where he was treated with great distance by the first minister. The next day he called at his house, and was not admitted. Surprised at this behaviour, he wrote to the minister and required an explanation of it. "You have wounded me in the most sensible manner," the minister replied, "and all intercourse between us must be at an end."—The ambassador, not knowing to what cause this violent procedure was to be attributed, resolved to obtain an interview with the minister. In this he at last succeeded, and learnt that it was occasioned by resentment on account of the affront put upon the duchess at his concert. "If you would convince me," added the minister, "that you had no part in it, dis-

card your impertinent secretary, and order him and his family to quit Dresden within two days. At this price all shall be forgotten, as I shall be satisfied that you resent as much as I do the insult which the duchess has received."

"You shall be satisfied," replied the ambassador. "Indeed, I think the punishment you have condescended to name not proportioned to the insult."—On his return home, he immediately signified to Eugenio, that he had no longer any occasion for his services, and enjoined him to set out for Paris in four-and-twenty hours. "Too happy," he added, "to be acquitted at this price."

Eugenio, thunder-struck, inquired with a tremulous voice, what could have drawn upon him this cruel disgrace.—"You may ask your imprudent daughter," replied the ambassador. "The malignity and audacity she has inherited from you, have nearly broken the sacred ties which unite two nations made to esteem each other. Do not attempt to frame any excuses. If at this time tomorrow you are still in Dresden, I will not answer for your liberty."

Eugenio quitted the room in a state of stupefaction, and hurried home to impart the fatal intelligence to his wife and daughter. The latter, acknowledging her fault, which was now first known to her father, disappeared immediately. She ran pale and wild through the different streets of Dresden to the duchess's

house, where after the most affecting and reiterated entreaties, she was at last admitted to her presence. She threw herself upon her knees before the duchess, in hopes of softening her towards her father, whose total ruin was involved in his present sentence. "You alone, madam," exclaimed Julia bathed in tears, "you alone can save him from the resentment of the ambassador. My father is innocent! by all that is sacred, I can assure you that he is innocent!"—"You would persuade me then," said the duchess, "that the insult I received was not one of the happy sallies for which your father was always celebrated! I knew his talents in this way long ago, when I was at Paris, and am well convinced that from him alone could have proceeded a sarcasm so full of malignity; it was one far above your age; and you only take it upon yourself to save your guilty parent."—"Indeed, madam, I most solemnly assure you that the offence is mine alone; my father did not even know of it till this day."—"And how dare you then appear in my presence? Oh! if your heart and tongue are at your age capable of so much venom, the mischief you may do in society cannot be too early counteracted; it is conferring a benefit on the world to prevent your ever appearing in it with credit. Away, thou daughter worthy of such a father! Never forget that it is in vain to humble ourselves at the feet of those whom we have not hesitated to insult; and that wounded self-love never par-

dons the offender." In pronouncing these words the duchess withdrew, leaving Julia prostrate on the floor, and for some moments unable to rise. At length, summoning all her resolution to her aid, she returned home and communicated to her parents what she had done, and that they had nothing to hope.

Eugenio, with distraction in his countenance and despair in his soul, resolved to set out that very night. His disappointed ambition, the prospect of future misery that was presented to his mind, the grief of his wife, the despair of his daughter, who incessantly uttered the most heart-rending self-reproaches, struck all at once upon his mind, which was incapable of sustaining so sad a reverse. After travelling for some days, he was obliged to stop at a little village on the frontiers of France, where, at a distance from all medical assistance, he was seized with a fever which put an end to his existence, in the arms of his wife and of his dear Julia.

Unable to bear the idea of separating herself from the remains of an adored father, whose death she could not but reproach herself with having occasioned, the latter could not think of quitting the spot where they were deposited, and persuaded her mother to establish herself in the village. Here they were soon reduced to live by the labour of their hands ; while, in addition to this distress, Julia had to support the mournful spectacle of beholding a tender mother in misery, owing to her fault alone. The

only consolation she experienced in this dreadful state was, to go every morning and scatter flowers upon the obscure grave of her father, where her trembling hand engraved this concise and affecting epitaph :

“ THE DANGERS OF A TURN FOR SATIRE.”

THE CHOICE OF A HUSBAND.

IF the choice of a friend be important, as contributing essentially to the charm of our existence ; of how much more importance is the choice of a husband, since on that depends all our future happiness or unhappiness ! The ties of friendship may be broken, and replaced again by others perhaps even more dear ; but those of marriage are indissoluble, death only can break them. No young person ought therefore to form them without making reflections to this effect : “ I unite my destinies forever to this man, he is to become the arbiter of my fate, of my fortune, of my reputation : I have no longer any name but his ; I am to share the successes or the reverses of his fortune ; his glory or dishonour ; his joy or his sorrow ; his watchings, his labours, his pains, his pleasures, in a word his whole existence.” What might be said further upon this subject will be best illustrated by the following little narrative :

Monsieur Auberton was in his youth at the head of a very extensive cotton manufactory. His extreme assiduity in business, and some great improvements invented by him, as well for carrying the manufactures to greater perfection, as for prosecuting them with greater

economy, gained him the confidence and esteem of his principal so entirely, that he early took him in as a partner in the business. In gratitude for this kindness, young Auberton's attentions were redoubled; and this increasing the regard entertained for him by his friend and partner, the latter at length thought that he could not do better than strengthen their alliance by offering him in marriage his niece and sole heiress. This union completed the happiness of Auberton. His bride was one of those women whose solid good qualities contribute essentially to the prosperity of a person in business. She by turns assisted in the correspondence of the house, presided at packing up the goods, took care of and encouraged the workmen, and placed her highest pleasure and happiness in deserving the esteem and attachment of all about her. She was not desirous of expense or show in her dress, nor did she aim at luxuries in any way; she never aspired to any thing more than neatness and comfort. To succour the distressed and console the afflicted, were the only luxuries she valued, and she was never so happy as when surrounded by the numerous families of which she was the benefactress. A woman who united so many excellent qualities, was calculated above all others to be a mother, and to exercise in a becoming manner the numberless and important duties of that sacred office towards the helpless beings she had brought into the world. Madame Auberton had four daughters; but

she was too soon, alas ! cut off from the happiness of exercising her maternal duties towards them. She died in the flower of her age, leaving her husband inconsolable at his loss, and deeply regretted by all those who knew her and had long been sharers in her kindness.

Monsieur Auberton's only remaining pleasure was in the education of his daughters, in whom he endeavoured to cultivate to the best advantage the different tastes and dispositions which they exhibited as they grew up. Not long after this afflicting stroke, he experienced a new loss in the death of his respectable partner ; by him he was left sole proprietor of the extensive manufactory they had carried on together, and a large property in money also devolved to him.

As his daughters arrived at an age to enter into society, he adopted a style of life calculated to introducing them into the world in a manner conformable to his fortune, and the education they had received. The respectability of his character, and his amiable manners, soon drew about him a large society of persons of various classes and characters, among whom were several that presented themselves as declared suitors to his daughters. Eudocia, the eldest, and Clementina, the second, were addressed, the former by Baron Ostalis, chamberlain to a foreign prince resident in France, and the latter by Monsieur d'Ostange, son to one of the richest bankers in Paris. To be addressed by persons of such distinction, was highly gratifying

to the vanity of the two sisters. Under the title of the Baroness Ostalis, Eudocia anticipated appearing with splendour in the great world; while Clementina hoped to display all the luxuries that opulence could procure, as the wife of young D'Ostange, and thus to outshine her sisters. Monsieur Auberton represented to them in vain, that the desire of exaltation and splendour ought not alone to decide their choice, and pointed out the evils that might probably ensue from such imprudence. Eudocia and Clementina were too much flattered by the homage of their respective suitors, and dazzled by their outward qualities, to listen to the well-founded suggestions of their father.

Baron Ostalis was a complete courtier, whose graceful carriage and imposing manners announced at once that he was a person of good birth, and accustomed to live among the great world. And though in paying his court to the fair Eudocia there was an air of condescension in his manner that might have alarmed the caution of a more prudent woman, she was too much delighted to perceive this, and was impatient for the moment that was to introduce her to the public as the Baroness Ostalis. Clementina was on her part no less carried away by self-delusion. She was in ecstasies every time that young D'Ostange talked of his horses, his servants, his carriages, the pictures that he bought, and the jewels with which he should present her; and disposed herself beforehand

to second her future husband in all his luxury and prodigality.

The two infatuated sisters, blushing already at their humble origin, were united on the same day, the one to her illustrious, the other to her opulent, lover, without giving themselves any uneasiness whether their husbands might sympathise with them in tastes and characters, without even having any rational assurance that they were beloved. In this thoughtless manner did they quit their paternal house, where they had experienced uninterrupted happiness from their infancy, to throw themselves into the vortex of grandeur and of opulence.

Georgiana, the third daughter of Monsieur Auberton, had no desire to be distinguished either by rank or opulence; she had no ambition but to shine as a person of wit and taste. "I leave to others," she said, "the foolish vanity of a title, and the pleasure of amassing and counting money. True happiness in my opinion consists in a lively imagination, in that turn of ideas which gives a grace to every thing one does or says, in that delicate sensibility which elevates one above vulgar souls, and from which one finds a thousand charms perpetually arising. This is indeed to live; while those beings not more than half organised, who follow mechanically the common way of life, languish, and scarcely vegetate."

Georgiana found all these qualities in the elegant Monsieur de Luzi, whose studied dress,

easy gait, short sight, affectation, and lively impertinence, announced the most accomplished man of fashion. With very little information, but happy in an excellent memory, he could repeat again, with an imposing assurance, whatever he heard in the company of well-informed persons. With a very small fortune he had the secret of making an appearance as if he had a large one; that is to say, he possessed in a high degree the happy talent of amusing his creditors, and silencing their clamours, by an insinuating address, and a gracefulness of manner peculiar to himself.

Attracted by the fortune that Monsieur Auberton gave his daughters, he tried every means of pleasing Georgiana, by humouring her tastes and studying her inclinations; and succeeded so well as to be preferred by her to many who were much his superiors in rank and fortune. Blinded by the tinsel with which Monsieur de Luzi shone, she thought she saw in him the phoenix of his sex, and imagined that if she were once married to this graceful Celadon, she should soon become one of the most distinguished women in Paris. Her father represented to her the fatuity and indifferent circumstances of her lover, who had neither fortune nor expectations; but his advice was no more regarded by her than it had before been by her sisters. She declared that no other man had equal merit in her eyes, and that the choice she had made was irrevocable, as she was convinced that she could never meet with another

so worthy of her : she was accordingly soon after married to this bewitching object. He had furnished his apartments splendidly for the occasion ; had bought a superb carriage and a pair of fine spirited horses, with elegant laced liveries for his servants.

Monsieur Auberton was now left with only Gabrielle, his youngest daughter. Some considerable losses which this worthy man soon after met with in his business, but which he carefully concealed from every body, insensibly affected his health, and the natural cheerfulness of his disposition. The ostentation too of his three married daughters, who emulated each other in expense, and the continual dissipation in which they lived, gave him still more uneasiness than the concealed chagrin which was preying upon him ; he had besides the mortification of finding himself almost entirely neglected by them. The Baroness Ostalis, occupied by the duties that grandeur and etiquette imposed upon her, forgot those more sacred ones due to her father. She came to see him but seldom, and then as it were by stealth, as she was ashamed of her humble birth being known amongst the grand circles in which she moved. Madame D'Ostange seemed in visiting her father to be performing an irksome task, nor did she appear by her behaviour to recognise in him the author of her existence, the protector of her infancy. Madame de Luzi came indeed more frequently ; but it was less from filial tenderness, than because she was in

want of money to discharge the large debts which she and her husband were daily contracting.

In the mean time the tender attachment that the sweet and modest Gabrielle bore to her father increased every day. She had, like her sisters, many offers of marriage, but none sufficiently agreeable for her to have any wish of accepting them. She did not consider marriage as a connection to be formed with no other view than as a means of appearing with splendour in the world; but she was sensible that her own happiness and that of her husband were wholly dependent upon the choice she might make. Following the example of her mother, whom she in every respect resembled, her wish was to make every body about her happy; and she thought herself so essential now to the comfort of her father's life, that she could not resolve to leave him. When he pressed her to make a choice, and to contract ties which with her disposition were likely to insure her happiness, she answered him with tears in her eyes, "Who will then take care of you, my dear father, in your declining years? Deprived of my tender mother, abandoned, as it may almost be said, by my sisters, I am your only remaining comfort, and can I bear the thoughts of being separated from you?"

Monsieur Auberton replied with emotions which were not to be controlled: "No, my dear Gabrielle, Heaven forbid that I should sacrifice you to myself! Do not then suffer me

to go out of the world without the satisfaction of leaving you under the protection of one who, when I am gone, will supply my place as your guide and support.”—“ Believe me, my dear father, it will not be easy for me to find a man with whom I could wish to unite myself. If ever I do yield to your solicitations, I should like my husband to be of a profession useful to the country ; I would not require of him any other title than that of an honest man, or more fortune than would place us above want ; I would rather see him obliged, in order to maintain himself and me in easy circumstances, to cultivate the talents he has received from nature and acquired by education. Above all, I should wish him to be a man of good understanding, and of a decided character. The greatest misfortune that could befall me, would be to find myself united to one who was wanting in sense and judgement, of a weak and timid disposition. The wife of such a man must every moment experience sufferings, that not all the authority she assumes over him can soften. To see him whom I had chosen to protect and defend me, weak and vacillating, would be to me the most insupportable of punishments. I would have him possess real sensibility ; I would wish to see him emulous of acquiring general esteem and well-merited reputation ; incapable of giving or putting up with an offence ; and far from seeking to make a bargain for the wife of his choice, as he would for a slave, I would have him require no other

portion than those qualities of the heart and mind requisite to form an amiable woman, and the certainty that he is the object of her affections. Assist me, my dear father, in finding such a husband ; and in uniting our fates, we will unite also in administering to your comfort and happiness."

"That is to say, my good Gabrielle, you would seek perfection, which is a thing not to be found amongst men. Believe me, it were better not to require too much. Be assured that you are loved, and when to that indispensable requisite, you find united in the man your heart selects, talents, good morals, and habits of industry, do what your excellent mother did by me, prefer him without hesitation to his numerous rivals.'" These conversations were frequent between the father and daughter ; and the former was the more earnest with Gabrielle to fix her choice, as he felt his strength decline daily, and continued to suffer heavy losses in his business.

Circumstances connected with the present state of his affairs, about this time brought him acquainted with a young lawyer, whose first appearance at the bar had been attended with very unusual success. His name was Franval ; he had no fortune except what was derived from his profession ; but his business had been for some time daily increasing. His features, without being regular, were expressive ; he had a quick penetrating eye ; was tall ; easy in his

carriage and deportment, pleasing and polite in his manners. But his most irresistible charm was so sweet and persuasive a voice, that whatever he said found its way irresistibly to the heart. He had already made a great many friends, and was at six-and-twenty classed in the public opinion amongst those lawyers who promise to arrive at very great eminence.

In the different interviews that Franval had with Monsieur Auberton upon the subject of his business, Gabrielle soon remarked in him the principal qualities that she wished to find in a husband. Concealing within her own mind this first impression, she studied the young lawyer's character with redoubled care, and in a short time was fully convinced that in an union with him she should find all the happiness she promised herself in the marriage state. These sentiments were immediately communicated to her father, and with them an earnest request that, before any further steps were taken, he would above all things assure himself that the object of her choice was inspired with feelings entirely responsive to them. Monsieur Auberton was delighted at what he heard, and resolved to lose no time in sounding his new friend : for this he was soon presented with a favourable opportunity. As they were one day engaged in conversation together, not upon matters of business, the name of Gabrielle being casually mentioned, Franval could not refrain from observing, with no small de-

gree of eagerness, that whoever obtained her hand would be blessed above the common lot of mortals. "It depends upon yourself alone to be that happy man," said the father quite overjoyed, and pressing the hand of his friend with an involuntary emotion.

"On me ! I cannot aspire...." "That must be determined by your genuine sentiments towards her. Every body admires and praises Gabrielle; but whoever would obtain her hand must feel for her a profound and sincere attachment."—"Nobody in this case can assure her happiness better than myself," replied Franval with a tone and manner that testified his sincerity. "No one," he added, "can appreciate her excellent qualities more highly than I do; and but for the distance of fortune that separates us...."—"There is no longer any," exclaimed Auberton, pressing him in his arms: "Gabrielle, on her side, is not blind to the merit by which you are distinguished; and as you love her, I may from this moment embrace you as my son-in-law." Then calling in his daughter, he presented Franval to her as her future husband, with an earnest request that no unnecessary delay might be made in the completion of a marriage which would accomplish an object he had long so ardently desired.

When the three elder sisters were informed of what had passed, they all expressed the utmost surprise at an alliance which they had the arrogance to term so extremely disproportioned; and each thought that Gabrielle might have

married better amongst their connections. "My dear sisters," said Gabrielle, "I desire no other title than that of being a happy wife."—"Can one be so in an obscure situation?" replied the three sisters at once. "The career of my future husband," she said, "is far from being obscure; a celebrated lawyer has few superiors to look up to."—"She is right," said Auberton; "I prefer a man of talents in the law, who preserves the honour, the fortune, and the repose of families, to all those egotists who disturb them by the depravity of their morals, or ruin them by their ridiculous ostentation."

"But what will Baron Ostalis say when he hears that his sister-in-law is going to marry a lawyer?"—"He will say that she has not, like you, the foolish vanity to aim at raising herself above the situation in which she was born."

"And Monsieur d'Ostange, who intended her for a rich banker?"

"I should be afraid of great opulence."

"And Monsieur de Luzi, what shall I say to him?"

"That he ought to pay his debts," replied Auberton with impatience, "before he arraigns the conduct of others. Gabrielle marries for herself, and not for you.—The son-in-law that she will give me will not be ashamed of her connections, and of the manufactory from which the fortunes of the family have been derived."

This reproof silenced the three sisters, and

threw them into considerable confusion, as they could not in their hearts disavow its being justly merited. Their embarrassment was soon relieved by the entrance of Franval, which changed the conversation. He immediately perceived that they had been discussing his proposed marriage with Gabrielle, and that the alliance was not conformable to the taste of the three fine ladies. But wishing to avoid every thing which might lead to any altercation among them, he behaved with so much politeness, and made himself so agreeable, that they went away less prejudiced against him than they had been at first, and observed to each other that he really seemed amiable, but it was a great pity he was only a lawyer.

The three sisters were present at the marriage, loaded with diamonds and all kinds of showy ornaments; but Monsieur de Luzi was the only one of the husbands who attended. Baron Ostalis excused himself, as he said that the prince had occasion for his services. Monsieur d'Ostange, who despised every body less wealthy than himself, alleged that indispensable business obliged him to be absent on that day from Paris. Their absence, however, did not excite any regret, or interrupt the wedding being celebrated with that cheerfulness and propriety which was suited to the good sense of the parties. The young people lived with Monsieur Auberton, who every day rejoiced with his daughter in the choice she had made. The affectionate attention he received from both,

was indeed now the only consolation remaining to him. His affairs became constantly more and more involved, from the bad faith of many persons with whom he was connected in business, so that at last he was obliged to sell every thing in order to fulfil his engagements. Thus was his once flourishing business entirely overthrown.

Franval, who in addition to his wife's fortune made a very comfortable income by his profession, experienced the greatest pleasure in now offering his father-in-law an asylum with them, where the only contest between him and his dear Gabrielle was, to exceed each other in the kindness shown him. His other sons-in-law showed him none. While he continued to be in opulence, he received frequent visits from Monsieur de Luzi; but as they were entirely visits of interest, they ceased with the loss of his fortune. His three elder daughters came sometimes to see him; but far from bringing him any consolation, they only added to his chagrins by the histories they related of their respective grievances. The Baroness complained of the arrogance with which she had been treated by the Baron, ever since the prospect of receiving any additional fortune with her was at an end; and the complaints of the other sisters were of a similar nature.

"I am at last then the only happy one of the four," said Gabrielle to Franval with the most ingenuous affection; "you are but too severely revenged for the contempt with which

you have been treated.” But the happiness of the amiable Gabrielle did not remain wholly uninterrupted. Her father, enfeebled by age and the secret griefs that preyed upon his heart, soon sunk under them, and expired surrounded by his four daughters, and the only son-in-law from whom he had ever received the attentions to which such a connection gave him a claim. His death excited a great alarm among some of his creditors, whose claims had only been suspended on the prospect of a future arrangement, and it now became impossible that any should be made. Franval, however, considered it as a duty due to the memory of his respectable father-in-law and his beloved wife to satisfy these demands, though it cost him nearly all the fortune he had received with the latter. But his own profession was now fully adequate to supporting himself and his family in ease and competence; and none of the other sons-in-law of the deceased were in a situation, if they had been disposed, to contribute any share of the payment.

Baron Ostalis soon after took advantage of a declaration of war between France and the country of the prince under whom he had his appointment, to leave the unhappy Eudocia to her fate with the charge of a child, the only fruit of their marriage.

Almost at the same time Monsieur d’Ostange, meeting with some unexpected losses, and too proud to retrench his mode of living in the place which had witnessed his former luxury,

declared himself a bankrupt and quitted Paris ; leaving his wife, still young and handsome, with two infants. Monsieur de Luzi, to complete the groupe, having long before spent all the fortune he received with Georgiana, now insolently seized the pretence of her father's insolvency to demand a divorce, and, to add to the cruelty of such conduct, abandoned her at the moment when she was on the point of bringing her first child into the world.

It was under these circumstances that Fraval displayed all the excellence of his character. He soothed with the kindest attentions the sorrows of his sisters-in-law, and only requited their former contempt by uniting with his wife in constant endeavours to alleviate the distress in which they found themselves. His reputation in his profession was now so great, that it brought him in a very considerable income, and by judicious œconomy he soon saved a capital of above ten thousand pounds, with which he purchased an estate at Brie in the environs of Meaux. He did not at the time acquaint his wife with what he had done ; but pretending that some important business obliged him to be absent awhile, he made in secret all the preparations necessary for executing a project which he had planned. On returning to Paris, he told his wife that he proposed realising his property in the purchase of land ; and as he had seen an estate at Brie which he thought would suit them, he was very desirous that they should go and look

at it together. It was then the month of September, and this affectionate husband had contrived that they should set out upon their expedition on his dear Gabrielle's birth-day. They went first to a farm belonging to the estate, whence they had an excellent view of the house, which was surrounded by charming pleasure-grounds.—“What a delightful place!” said Madame Franval: “how happy one might be there!”—“That is also to be sold,” said her husband, “and by getting time allowed us for the payment, we might possibly be able to buy it: suppose we go and look at it?”—“With all my heart,” said Gabrielle, “but I am afraid the place will be too large for us.”—They went then to the house, where the servants received them as strangers. They looked over every part of it, and Madame Franval expressed herself as highly delighted, often repeating how happy she should consider herself if she was owner of so sweet a place. But what was her surprise, when on going into one of the rooms she perceived a full-length portrait of her father! When she had recovered the first emotion occasioned by a sight so unexpected, she eagerly inquired of her husband the meaning of a circumstance which appeared to her quite an ænigma. He only answered by taking her into the next room, where the first things she observed were her own port-folio and drawing-box, and the next a picture of herself surrounded by a number of poor persons, who had been re-

lieved by her during a very severe winter, for which purpose she had sold a number of valuable trinkets. "Such a picture was not wanting," she said, "to make me love this place, where I perceive we are at home."—On a signal given, the servants now came in to pay their respects to Madame Franval as their mistress. She was next conducted to a range of sleeping-rooms, when over the first door they came to, she read: "The apartment of Eudocia".... on another, "The apartment of Clementina".... and on a third, "The apartment of Georgiana"..... "You see now," said Franval smiling, "that this habitation is not too large for us."—"O best of brothers!" exclaimed Madame Franval, "it belongs to you alone to revenge yourself in such a manner."

"Will not Monsieur and Madame," said the gardener, now entering, "honour my gardens with their presence?"—"Undoubtedly, honest man," replied Franval, "your lady must see every thing." Gabrielle and her husband then walked through the kitchen-garden, the groves, the meadows, the orchards, and found there all that could contribute to the comforts and even luxuries of life, united with the beauties of nature and the modest embellishments of art.

But the greatest and most agreeable surprise that Monsieur Franval had prepared for his wife was yet to come. On turning into a little grove of acacias, the interwoven branches

of which formed a natural harbour, she saw her three sisters sitting under the delightful shade with their children about them. Eudocia was teaching her little boy, of five years old, to read. Clementina was tying up some flowers for her two infants, who were sitting at her feet; and Georgiana was suckling her baby. The apparent harmony of this union, and the expression of tranquil happiness upon their countenances, threw Madame Franval into such an ecstasy of joy, that embracing her husband she exclaimed, "I defy you now to add to my happiness!".... The sound of her voice attracted the attention of the three sisters, who rose and came towards her with their children, completing this delightful scene by their caresses. Gabrielle pressed them all eagerly to her heart, and they embraced her and Franval, calling the latter their friend, their benefactor, their father. The four sisters thus assembled again under one roof, after all their disunion and misfortunes, felt the tender sentiments and sweet union of their infancy renewed with even increased fervour.

Franval now explained to Gabrielle all the particulars of his purchase and subsequent arrangements, which included that of the sisters being to remain their constant guests in this charming retreat. Paris now only presented them with painful recollections; and they were so generally disgusted with the great world, that they had resolved to devote themselves entirely to the education of their children. This could

never be done under auspices more favourable, than with the excellent Franval as their assistant and protector. "I have chosen the present day," added Franval, "for this re-union, as I knew that I could not give my Gabrielle a festival equally acceptable; and I imparted my secret to her sisters, that they might be ready here to complete her surprise."

"O most amiable and most affectionate of men," said Gabrielle, "your inestimable qualities become more and more apparent every day; and I feel with sentiments of the most lively gratitude and affection, that of all the blessings Heaven can bestow upon a woman, there is none which can be compared with that, of being happy in, and justly proud of, the husband of her choice."

MARSHAL CATINAT'S TREE.

AT the country-seat of Saint-Gratian, in the beautiful valley of Montmorency, is a tree planted by the hand of Marshal Catinat. It is a Spanish chesnut, and stands in the court before the house, spreading its vast branches round to such an extent that it shades nearly the whole area. To preserve this memorial of a hero, whose name will ever be revered not only by those brave warriors who best understand the value of his talents, but by every individual of that country to which he rendered such important services, the utmost care and attention is always shown to avert its falling into decay, or being in any way broken or injured. Thus, although it has already braved the rigours of more than a hundred winters, it still appears in the highest vigour, rearing its lofty head with the utmost majesty, as if holding the supreme dominion over the shrubs by which it is surrounded, in the same manner as the great man by whom it was planted held supreme sway, by his wisdom and valour, over the hearts of those soldiers whom he had so often conducted to victory.

Round the foot of this tree is a large wooden bench, on which are inscribed a number of names dear to every Frenchman. This bench is a constant rendezvous of the inhabitants of

that neighbourhood. The old men come in the winter to warm themselves in the bright sun, which then shines through the branches deprived of their leaves, and there talk over the many actions in which the noble planter of the tree so eminently distinguished himself. In fine weather the children assemble underneath its shade, and by the vivacity of their sports, and the happiness painted in their features, seem to imbibe, as under the influence of a tutelary genius, the first impressions of fortitude and courage. Hither, too, often resort faithful friends to pour out to each other the effusions of their hearts, and commemorate the private virtues which distinguished Catinat, and which have occasioned him to be considered as a perfect model of true friendship.

This charming abode, no less agreeable by its situation and its fertility than celebrated as having belonged to so illustrious a hero, was a few years ago inhabited by Admiral Bruix, a name which will ever be remembered with honour in the annals of the French marine. He generally passed there all the time that he could spare from his important functions, sleeping in the very chamber which had once been Catinat's, the windows of which looked upon the court where stood the famous chesnut-tree.

The Gothic bed in which the Marshal had so long reposed was reserved for himself; and he made use, with a sort of religious veneration, of the same furniture that had been used

by this great man. But still more effectually to recall the remembrance of him to the inhabitants of Saint-Gratian, he was anxious to draw around him all persons in the neighbourhood suffering under indigence or misfortunes, and after the example of the hero to succour and relieve them.

Admiral Bruix was one day informed by his gardener, that a young woman, plainly dressed and veiled, had been for some time in the habit of repairing every morning just before sunrise, accompanied by an old female servant, to the gates of the court; where leaving the servant she entered it, and coming alone under Catinat's tree she there knelt down, and, raising her hands in an attitude of devotion, seemed to address a fervent prayer to Heaven. The Admiral thought that there was something very romantic in this account, and was seized with an eager curiosity to investigate the cause of an appearance so extraordinary. The next morning, therefore, at break of day, he placed himself at his window, and soon perceived the young woman. She first seated herself upon the bench at the foot of the tree, where she remained for a few minutes, appearing lost in thought; then suddenly starting up, with one knee upon the ground, she seemed to offer up her prayer; after which she rejoined the old woman, who waited for her at the gate. The Admiral, judging by her movements, by her walk, and by her air, which were all truly graceful and elegant, that she was not of the

ordinary class, was determined, if possible, to inform himself further upon a subject which seemed now so enveloped in mystery.

On the morrow, therefore, instead of remaining at his window, he at break of day descended into the court, and, concealing himself among the shrubs, there waited the arrival of the lovely pilgrim. She returned at her usual hour, and prostrating herself beneath the tree he heard her distinctly pronounce these words: "O worthy pupil of the great Turenne! to thee I devote the friend of my childhood, the husband whom my heart has chosen! Deign, great Catinat, to look down from thy blest abode upon my dear Frederic, to watch over and protect him! Guide his steps along the path of glory, and may he soon return to entwine with his laurels the chains of Hymen!"—Having finished her invocation, she rose, and, gathering a leaf from the tree, first moistened it with her tears, and then placed it in her bosom. This done, she departed, still frequently turning and casting her eyes towards a spot which she seemed not to quit without deep regret.

The Admiral, who had advanced softly towards the tree, the size of which prevented his being seen by the fair suppliant, had no doubt, from the tenor of her prayer, as well as from the enthusiasm with which it was uttered, that she was the betrothed wife of some young man who was now absent serving his country on the field of honour. The sweet tone of

her voice, the elegance of her manner, and above all the purity of her language, seemed besides an assurance that she must be a person of birth and education. He immediately ordered one of his servants to follow her at a distance, and learn if possible her name, her place of abode, and any particulars that were known of her history. The servants soon returning, told him that she had crossed the park of Saint-Gratian, and gone in by a little gate to a garden which was upon the lake of Montmorency.

The Admiral's curiosity was but half satisfied with this imperfect intelligence; but it was sufficient to serve as a clue to obtaining further particulars. Pursuing his inquiries, therefore, he soon learnt that this garden belonged to the house of Madame de Vandeuil, the widow of an officer of infantry, who had an only daughter by name Matilda; that this young lady had been educated in the village of Saint-Gratian, on a footing of great intimacy with the son of a brother officer of her father's; that Frederic Saint-Elme, which was the name of her lover, had been for two years with the army of Italy, and that he was to be united to Matilda as soon as he obtained the rank of a sub-lieutenant. He afterwards learnt, that since the departure of Frederic a considerable fortune had devolved to Matilda, in consequence of which she had a great many suitors; but that nothing could shake her constancy to the first object of her affections, and that it was on his account

she came every morning to Catinat's tree, there to invoke Heaven and the shade of Catinat in his favour. "Since then," said the Admiral to himself, as he learnt these particulars, "she invokes the assistance and protection of the hero whom I have taken upon myself to represent in this valley, it is I who must watch over her Frederic; and it shall from this moment be one of my first cares, to employ all my interest for hastening his promotion to a rank which will entitle him to the hand of his lovely and faithful friend."

He repaired then in a few days to Paris, in order to inform himself in what regiment Frederic was serving; and having obtained the information, he wrote immediately to the Colonel, recommending the young soldier to his especial protection, provided his conduct had rendered him worthy of it. The Admiral soon received an answer to his application, in which Saint-Elme was mentioned in terms of the highest eulogium, and the Colonel promised to attend on the very first opportunity to the Admiral's recommendation: he also assured him, that according to his request the young man should not be made acquainted with the obligation he owed him.

Monsieur de Bruix, thus satisfied with regard to the merits of the lover, was next desirous of putting the faith and constancy of Matilda to still further proof. He took advantage of the sociability which was always kept up in the summer season among the in-

habitants of the valley of Montmorency, to examine her character and conduct very narrowly. He soon perceived that she paid very little attention to the homage with which she was surrounded, that her whole manner evinced a heart entirely absorbed by one only object. Yet, in paying her those attentions which a man of polished manners will always show to her sex, he found in her the most amiable urbanity, that sweet candour and modesty, accompanied with a frankness of disposition, which evinced at once a pure but highly cultivated mind.

Wishing, however, to prove her still further, he went to pay a visit to Madame de Vandeuil, as a neighbour desirous of cultivating her acquaintance, when he adroitly turned the conversation upon the importance and sacred nature of the marriage ties; and observed, what an arduous task it was to a young person who had been well educated, and had a great number of admirers, to fix her choice with prudence. Then addressing himself to Matilda, "As for example, in your case, madam," said he, "how will you be able, among your numerous suitors, to decide with any certainty which is the most deserving of your hand?"—"Oh," answered Matilda with a sigh which she could not repress, "I am not afraid of being deceived. The best way of avoiding it is, to attach ourselves only to those whom we have known from our childhood, and never to abandon one so chosen, how brilliant soever

may be the prospects presented by any other connection.”—“Yet,” said the Admiral, still pursuing his project, and addressing himself to Madame de Vandeuil, “I am commissioned to add one to the number of those who aspire to the hand of your amiable daughter; he is my own relation, a young officer in the navy, of a most amiable disposition, and who promises to rise very high in his profession.”—“Indeed,” said Madame de Vandeuil, “this is a proposal by which I feel myself highly flattered and honoured, but I must leave it to my daughter entirely to reply to it.”—“The honour of being allied to Admiral Bruix,” said Matilda, “is one of which I can assure him I am highly sensible; but I know his candour will pardon me in declining it, when I confess to him that my heart has been very long engaged.”—“Might I presume without being thought impertinent to ask, who is the happy and favoured object?”—“He is not,” replied Matilda, “of equal birth and rank with the relative whom you have done me the honour to propose; he is, indeed, no more at present than a young soldier without rank or distinction in his profession, and known only by his courage and good conduct.”—“You astonish me, madam!” said the Admiral. “With so many advantages of person and fortune,” “The latter have devolved to me since the departure of my Frederic, but they have made no change in my heart; and if in consequence of my accession of fortune I must

forsake the friend of my childhood, him whom my father has so often called his son, much rather would I return again to my happy obscurity.”—“Yet surely a certain rank in the world is desirable.”—“For which reason,” said Madame de Vandeuil, “I have only engaged to give my daughter to her lover when he becomes an officer.”—“Certainly, this is a means of securing his performing prodigies of valour, that he may the sooner obtain so rich a recompense. Yet, opportunities of signalling himself will not occur every day, and it may still be a long time.”—“Well, if it must be so, I must arm myself with patience.”—“How? can nothing change your resolution?—is it so irrevocably fixed?”—“Judge how irrevocably, when I can even reject proposals so flattering as those you have now made me.”—“I see that but one wish remains for me to offer; it is to see you speedily united to the man whom so faithful an attachment pronounces to be worthy of you.”

Monsieur de Bruix, now fully satisfied of the faith and constancy of Matilda, renewed his solicitations to the Colonel for the advancement of Saint-Elme, and received the strongest assurances that it should not be delayed, the moment that the young man had distinguished himself in a manner which might give him a sufficient claim to promotion. Madame de Vandeuil and her daughter soon after returned the Admiral's visit, when he proposed a walk, and leading them at length, after showing them

other parts of the grounds, to the tree, invited them to rest themselves under its shade. They accepted the invitation, though a gentle blush stole over the cheeks of Matilda, which gave additional lustre to her charms. "It is here," said Madame de Vandeuil, "that Frederic and Matilda, who were then children, imbibed the first impressions of that friendship for each other which is now so deeply rooted in both their hearts. Their innocent sports, the playful affection of their infancy, matured by time into so strong and confirmed an attachment, is all my work, nor do I fear that I shall ever have cause to regret the encouragement it has received from me."—"Yes," said Matilda, "it was on this bench, in the very place which I now occupy, that Frederic said to me on the day of his departure; 'All my endeavours shall be exerted to imitate the model set before us by the hero whose shade seems now to hover around our heads as our tutelary genius and protector: thus, alone, can I render myself worthy of you. Ah! if in my absence your steps are sometimes directed towards this tree, invoke the manes of this great man in behalf of your friend; and if I am so happy as to perform any action worthy of being recorded, come hither and return thanks for it, and say that less could not be expected from one who received his education under the shade of Catinat's tree!'" From these affecting words the Admiral learnt the secret motive of the lovely Matilda's daily pilgrimages to the

spot : still, however, he resolved cautiously to conceal his knowledge of them.

Several months passed, in which the war was carried on with redoubled vigour ; and Frederic, engaged in long marches and perpetually in action, had scarcely time to write to his beloved friends at Saint-Gratian. Matilda, distressed at this cruel silence, and tormented with the idea of the new dangers to which her lover was exposed, sunk into a state of such profound melancholy, that it began to occasion her mother very serious alarms. Her only consolation was in her morning visits to the tree, where the prayers she offered up became every day longer and more fervent. At length one evening as she was reading aloud an eulogium of Marshal Catinat, and delighting herself with finding a great analogy between the youth of that great man and of her Frederic, a letter arrived from the latter to her mother. Madame de Vandeuil opened it with a trembling hand, and found its contents to be as follows : “ I write in great haste upon the field of battle ; the victory gained by the French army is complete, and I am just made sub-lieutenant : perhaps I may soon follow this letter.—O you, whom from my infancy I have always called by the tender name of mother, and you, my beloved sister, my adorable Matilda, at length I am worthy of being connected with you !

“FREDERIC DE SAINT-ELME.”

“He is an officer then!” exclaimed Matilda, almost breathless with ecstasy; “he is an officer, and we may soon hope to see him.”—“Brave and excellent Frederic,” said Madame de Vandeuil, scarcely less transported than her daughter, “I may then indeed call thee son! Let us,” she continued, “hasten to impart this welcome news to the Admiral; he has shown so kind an interest for us, that in gratitude we ought to carry him the intelligence ourselves: it is too late this evening to make him a visit; but to-morrow morning at breakfast. . . .”—“Yes, my dearest mother, we will both of us go—and—we will stop for an instant under Catinat’s tree.”

The next morning then they repaired to the Admiral’s house, and made the proposed communication. He affected much surprise, although he was already informed by the colonel of the young soldier’s promotion. “Indeed, sir,” said Matilda, “I was sure that I could not be mistaken when I expected Frederic soon to arrive at his present rank.”—“So early a promotion,” said the Admiral, “could not be obtained but by great personal merit, and by having distinguished himself on many occasions.”—“Oh how impatient I am to hear him relate them all! but how can it be possible that he should soon follow his letter?”—“Probably,” said the Admiral, “the Colonel may have chosen him to carry the account of the victory to Paris, as well with a view to the advantage he will derive from it, as to afford him an

opportunity of seeing his friends."—"Oh how much should we be indebted to the excellent Colonel!"—"Do not however too much flatter yourself with the idea, my dear young lady, this is only a conjecture."

As they were conversing thus, the old female servant who accompanied Matilda in her morning pilgrimages, came running to the house almost out of breath, crying, "Madame! Mademoiselle! he is come! he is come!"—"Is it possible?" exclaimed Matilda.—"I have seen him, I tell you; nay, he was so good as to shake hands with me; and God forgive me for presuming to say so, but I think he's a handsomer lad than ever."—"Oh let us hasten then, my dearest mother!"—"Wait for me, however, my daughter."—"I very much doubt," said the Admiral smiling, "whether it will be possible for you, Madame, to keep pace with Mademoiselle; she no longer sees us or hears us. But if you will favour me with accepting my arm—believe me I share sincerely in your joy, and earnestly wish to be introduced to your gallant young warrior."

They hastened then after Matilda, who was wholly carried away at first by her transports; yet afterwards recollecting herself, she stopped at the garden gate, reflecting that it was more consistent with modesty and decorum, to wait till her mother was come up, before she met her lover. The latter however, perceiving them, hastened to meet them, and arrived at the gate just at the same time with Madame de Vandeuil;

when eagerly pressing her hands, he asked her permission to embrace her lovely daughter. The emotions of the latter were now so great that she could scarcely support herself; and resting upon the arm of the Admiral, she presented Frederic to him, saying, "Now, my dear Admiral, are you surprised at my constancy?" At the word Admiral, Frederic advanced respectfully, saying, "Permit me, sir, to congratulate myself on having for a witness of one of the happiest moments of my life, a name which does so much honour to the French navy."—"Believe me, sir," said the Admiral, "that next to these two ladies no one can experience more pleasure than myself"—"In so short a time," said Matilda with enthusiasm, "to have arrived at such a rank!"—"Ah! could I press forward too eagerly to gather the laurels which were to secure to me the prize I was so anxious to obtain? Yet I owe less to my own merits than to the generous favour of my Colonel; he knew the motive I had to wish for a short absence from the army, and kindly proposed to the General, sending me to Paris with the dispatches. Never could any one evince more interest for me than the Colonel has done; a father could not have done more for his own son."—The Admiral here secretly rejoiced at finding that his recommendation had been attended with so happy an effect.

"But," said Madame de Vandeuil, "may we hope, my dear Frederic, to keep you some time among us?"—"I could only obtain leave

of absence for two months.”—“That is a very short time,” said Matilda involuntarily.—“The stronger reason,” said Monsieur de Bruix, “for hastening the wedding.”—“It is my ardent wish,” said Madame de Vandeuil, “that it should take place as soon as possible, and I propose to begin the preparations for it without delay; Admiral Bruix will, I hope, honour it with his presence?”—“I think myself indeed highly flattered by the invitation.”—“Become by the blessings you shed around you,” said Matilda with a most affecting tone and manner, “the father of all the inhabitants of this valley, I would fain ask you to crown my happiness on the most brilliant day of my life, by representing the parent whom I have lost.”—“I accept the office with transport,” said the Admiral, kissing her hands respectfully; “yes, lovely Matilda, I will endeavour to the best of my power to represent on that day your respectable father.” It was then agreed that the wedding should be celebrated on the Tuesday following.

Madame de Vandeuil accordingly began the necessary preparations for this happy day. All her family were invited to the wedding, as well as all the principal inhabitants of the valley. She besides determined to make it a day of festivity to the good peasantry around, and for this purpose a long tent was erected in her garden, where they were all to dine, and where the company were to dance in the evening. The day at length arrived; it was one of the finest

in the delightful month of May. Frederic hastened, accompanied by the nearest relations of his bride, to seek the Admiral at his own house; the latter immediately appeared dressed in his full uniform, and attended by several officers of the marine who served under him; when they all proceeded together to the house of Madame Vandeuil. The inhabitants of most of the neighbouring villages had assembled at the church of Saint-Gratian, whither Matilda, rendered still more beautiful by the agitation of the moment, was conducted by the Admiral. After the ceremony was over, the new-married couple returned home, where they received the congratulations of the persons of all ranks who were assembled upon the occasion. A grand dinner was then served, at which the bride was placed between her husband and her adopted father. After dinner they adjourned to the gardens, where the new-married couple were expected to begin the ball: this was carried on till very late in the night.

The Admiral retired early, not doubting in his own mind but that his amiable daughter and her husband would make a pilgrimage in the morning to the tree. He knew Matilda so well, that he had no doubt of her imparting to Frederic the vows which she had so often offered up there during his absence. He rose, then, at the first breaking of the dawn, and soon after saw the young couple appear. Matilda, supporting herself upon the arm of her warrior, said, "It was here, my dear Frederic,

that our first vows were exchanged ; how delightful will it be to renew them under the same shade !” — “ What happy days have we passed here together, my beloved Matilda ! but none was ever equalled by the present moment.” — “ After so long a separation, and after all the dangers that you have run, to find ourselves again united in so cherished a spot !” — “ Let us hasten, my charming friend, to offer beneath the shelter of this monument, the witness of our first loves, the overflowings of two faithful hearts.” — Then taking off his helmet, and laying it upon the bench, with one arm around his adored Matilda, and the other raised towards heaven, while both bent one knee to the earth, “ Shade of the great Catinat !” they said together, “ receive our vows, our homage !” — “ Grant,” said Frederic, “ that after thy example I may increase the glory of my country, may render my name illustrious, and prove myself worthy to be the husband of Matilda !” — “ Grant,” said Matilda, “ that after having run with splendour for many years the career of honour, he may return to pass his declining years in this valley, esteemed by his prince and his country, and beloved and cherished by all around him !” — “ Every time that I add to my laurels, here will I come to deposit those treasures, and say, ‘ ’Tis Catinat who has inspired me, I seemed to fight under his orders.” — “ Then the happiest of wives shall entwine a garland from this favourite tree, with which she will crown the head of her dear Frederic.” — “ And

often as we return under thy shade," they said, uniting their voices together, "to thee will we offer up our vows; to thee, the protector of our infancy, will we return our thanks for the tranquil happiness we have here so often enjoyed; we will do homage to thy memory, we will cherish, we will bless it."

"Come, my children, come to my arms!" said a voice which seemed to proceed from the tree itself. Matilda and Frederic, astonished, looked around them, when they saw the benevolent Admiral, who advanced from behind the tree, where he had been concealed, and who extending his arms to them, they both flew with transport into them. "Ah!" said Matilda, "who could expect that you would surprise us so early in the morning!—From whom could you learn that we were here?"—"It is not the first time," said the Admiral, casting a look of the utmost kindness and affection upon Matilda, "that I have been witness to the prayers and vows which you have uttered beneath this shade. 'Tis from yourself, my lovely daughter, that I first learned your attachment to our youthful hero."—"Ah!" said Frederic, "it is then surely to your kindness, to your generous protection that I owe my advancement, with all its delightful consequences. My Colonel always told me that I had a powerful friend, a zealous protector; I was ignorant to whom I was so much indebted, but now I can doubt it no longer. Yes, charming Matilda, 'tis he, who, touched by your prayers, has served me in se-

cret; 'tis he who has procured me the means of overstepping so rapidly the barriers which were placed between you and me."—"Yes," cried Matilda, "it must be so! I read it in that excellent man's countenance, I see it in those tears which escape involuntarily from his eyes, in that emotion which he is unable to restrain."—"Yes, my children," said the Admiral, pressing them to his bosom more eagerly than before, "yes, ye amiable and constant lovers, I was anxious to do for you what Catinat would have done with transport if he had been alive. In this I have only fulfilled a sacred duty; and remember, charming Matilda, that you yourself did me the honour of selecting me to represent your worthy father."

"Yes, our father, our friend till death," said Frederic pressing his hand eagerly. "Oh, how worthy are you to replace in this valley the benevolent hero whose abode you occupy!"—"I am no longer surprised," said Matilda, "at the tender interest you have shown to promote my happiness; but to what cause am I to attribute your ardent solicitations to recall my first choice, and accept the honour of an alliance with your family?"—"Solely to the desire of proving your heart, and assuring myself how deeply the tender sentiments you entertained for this young hero were impressed upon it. I found you a model of truth and constancy, and I dare predict that your husband,"—"Will be every year," said Matilda, "more and more distin-

guished in the career to which he has devoted himself, and become an illustrious ornament of his country, perhaps a second Catinat.”—

“ ’Tis then, most amiable of women, that you may say to all young persons who are of an age to love and to be beloved, Imitate the happy Matilda, nor ever permit either the splendour of rank, the advantages of fortune, or separation from the object, to shake the faith which has once been pledged to a worthy man under the sanction of your parents; always bearing in mind, that as there can be no true wedded happiness without love, so there can be no true love without constancy !”

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now, my dearest Flavia, carried you along the different paths which conduct to that important epoch of life, when the tastes and dispositions of the heart and mind are irrevocably fixed ; when the character is determined, when the degree of reputation we are to obtain in the world is decided, when our destinies are to be perhaps irrevocably enchained. I wished to conduct you myself along this arduous and dangerous route, that I might point out to you the rocks which were in danger of obstructing your steps, and indicate at the same time the means by which they were to be avoided. I thought that I might spare you a part of the fatigues and lassitude which attend the journey, by conversing with you as we pursued our route, and fixing your attention upon some of the most important points of view that presented themselves, by directing your thoughts and your reflections to some of those pictures, the charm and interest of which ought to leave in the heart impressions never to be effaced..

The advice of the most eloquent moralist expressed only in short adages and maxims, is

almost always given without effect at the age of adolescence, when the imagination, ever awake, ever ardent, revolts from any thing dry and sententious: but when the advice is supported by anecdotes, and consecrated by the authority of illustrious and revered names, it remains profoundly impressed upon the heart; attention is excited by curiosity, we put ourselves in the place of the persons presented to us; and the lesson becomes of so much more value, as in not striking directly at ourselves it spares in some degree our self-love.

Thus have I seen thee more than once, my child, in writing down my advice as I dictated, smile even when the story pointed out a fault which I wished thee to correct; or have seen thee melted even to tears, when it presented some affecting stroke, some laudable action which thou wert emulous of imitating. I have found that there never was any occasion to say, "Thou resemblest such or such a person,—this anecdote paints thee to the life;"—I told my story, immediately thy eyes were cast down, an interesting blush overspread thy countenance, which proved to me that the application was made; and the eagerness with which you consecrated in writing, even the most severe reproof, assured me that, far from exciting in thee any thing like anger, it attracted thy interest, and secured me a still higher place in thy confidence.

Yes, my child, you are arrived at that age

when the education is completed, when one enters into society, and shows one's-self such as one is always to remain: in a word, you have nearly completed your eighteenth year. This epoch, at the same time that it is the most brilliant for a young woman, is the most dangerous. The homage with which she is surrounded, often destroys in her that interesting candour which forms her highest charm. The number of eyes that are fixed upon her, at her first appearance in the world, lead her often to consider that as admiration which is nothing more than curiosity. The first attention she excites, the silence observed when she speaks, and the circle formed around to listen to her, unite to persuade her that she is something far superior to what she is in reality. Thence arises that blind arrogance which makes her at length a subject of ridicule; thence it is that she assumes a coquettish manner, which destroys in an instant the fruit of the tenderest cares and the best-managed education.

Be cautious, above all things, my dear Flavia, not to presume too far upon the privilege of your sex to interest and to charm. Never forget that the happy age which gives it awakens observation and envy, and that at eighteen indulgence is no longer to be looked for. Bear constantly in mind, that this is the epoch which fixes the public opinion; at which, if I may be allowed the expression, all the virtues and defects of character, the in-

fluence of which will predominate throughout life, are faithfully registered. May thy modesty and discretion lead thee to enjoy in peace and tranquillity the lot which fate has reserved for thee! Do not imitate those misguided young women, who, dazzled by the first notice they attract, and which perhaps is fleeting as a shadow, imagine themselves the objects of universal admiration, and are ever eager to be exhibiting themselves in public. The flowers of spring, exposed continually to the scorching rays of the sun, soon lose alike their brilliant colouring and delightful odour; while those which flourish under the shelter of a protecting foliage preserve their freshness for a length of time, and even charm though seen only in their wane.

Pardon me this digression, my daughter, and consider it only as the effusion of a soul habituated to expand itself to thine, or rather as the last lesson of a parent preceptor. Yet a short time and I shall perhaps be possessed of thee no longer; Love and Hymen will speak to thee in a voice more eloquent than mine, will snatch thee from the arms of thy first friend, to impose upon thee in thy turn the duties which I have had so much delight in fulfilling towards thee. Oh, if my cares and my tenderness have given me any rights over thy heart, if my advice is dear to thy remembrance, if thou regardest it as a paternal ægis which, protecting thy youth, preserved it from all dangers,

promise me, my Flavia, sometimes to recur to it, and, as a recompense for my anxieties, to make him to whom thy destiny shall be united consider it also!—Then shall I hope that he may say, “I owe to this work an amiable friend and a faithful companion, who forms the principal blessing and happiness of my life.”

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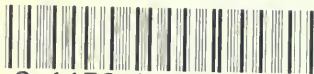
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